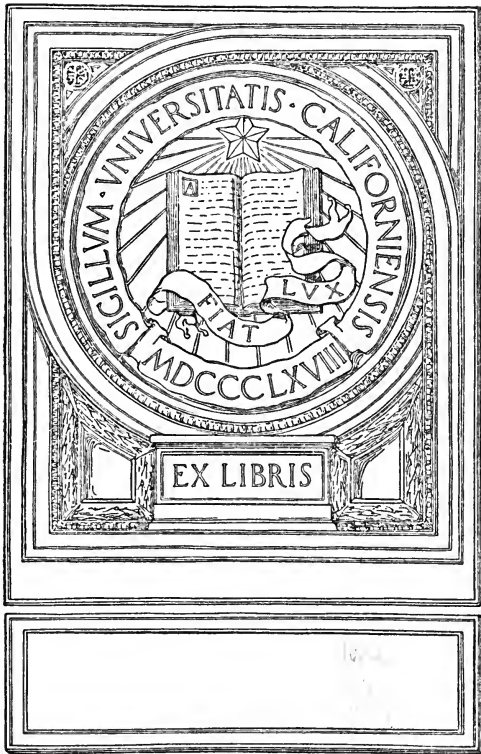
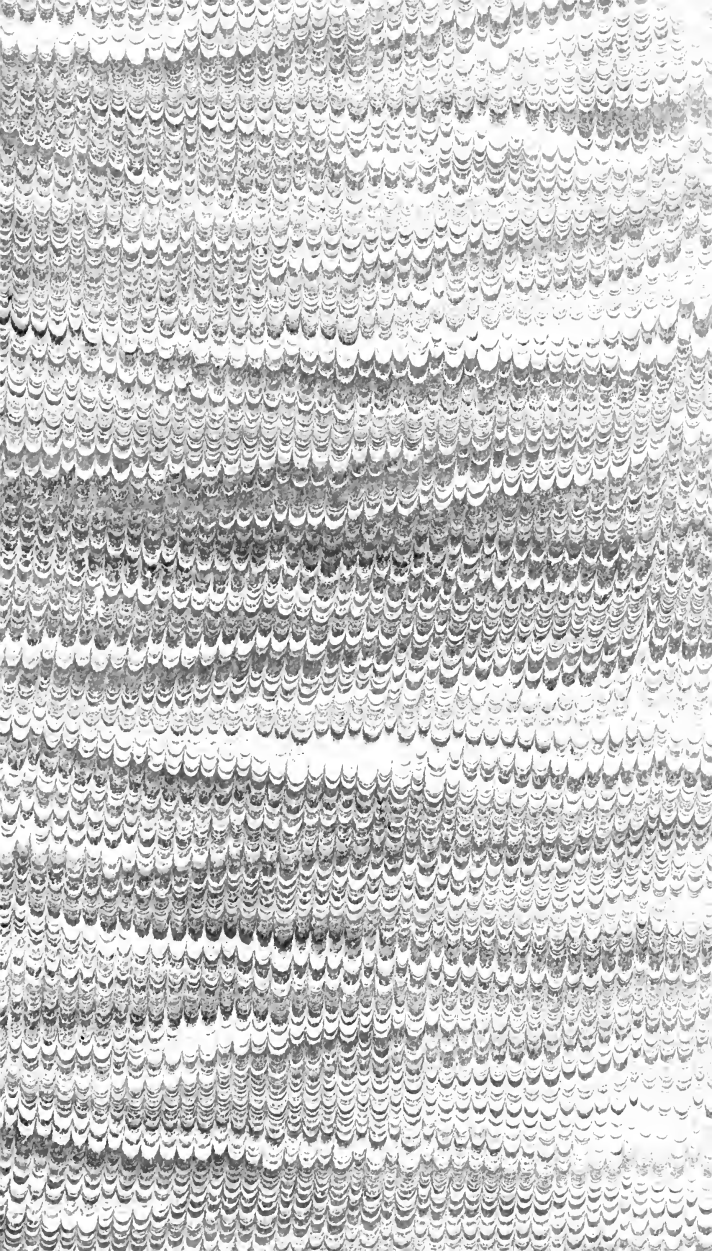




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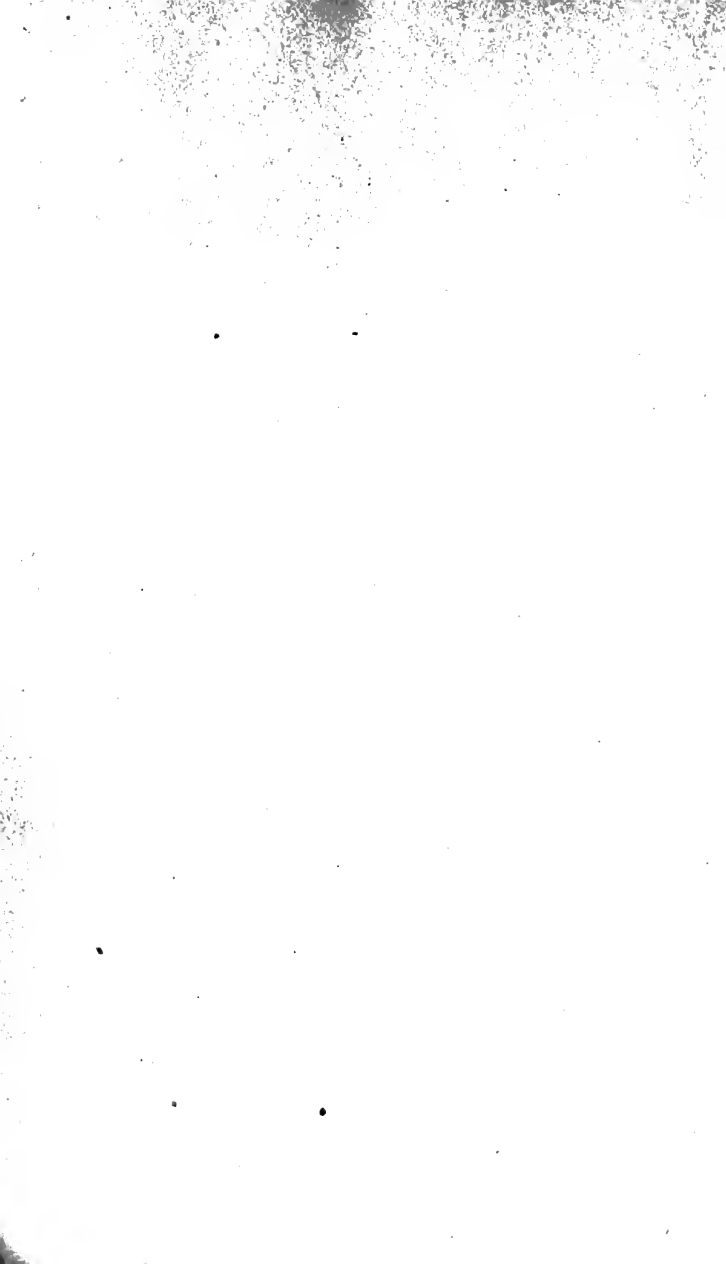




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A  
Philosophical Enquiry  
INTO THE  
ORIGIN of our IDEAS  
OF THE  
S U B L I M E  
AND  
BEAUTIFUL.



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T H E

P R E F A C E.

*T*HE author hopes it will not be thought impertinent to say something of the motives which induced him to enter into the following enquiry. The matters which make the subject of it had formerly engaged a great deal of his attention. But he often found himself greatly at a loss; he found that he was far from having any thing like an exact theory of our passions, or a knowledge of their genuine sources; he found that he could not reduce his notions to any

*fixed or consistent principles; and he had remarked, that others lay under the same difficulties.*

*He observed that the ideas of the sublime and beautiful were frequently confounded; and that both were indiscriminately applied to things greatly differing, and sometimes of natures directly opposite. Even Longinus, in his incomparable discourse upon a part of this subject, has comprehended things extremely repugnant to each other, under one common name of the Sublime. The abuse of the word Beauty, has been still more general, and attended with still worse consequences.*

*Such a confusion of ideas must certainly render all our reasonings upon subjects of this kind extremely inaccurate and inconclusive. Could this admit*

*mit of any remedy, I imagined it could only be from a diligent examination of our passions in our own breasts; from a careful survey of the properties of things which we find by experience to influence those passions; and from a sober and attentive investigation of the laws of nature, by which those properties are capable of affecting the body, and thus of exciting our passions. If this could be done, it was imagined that the rules deducible from such an enquiry might be applied to the imitative arts, and to whatever else they concerned, without much difficulty.*

*It is four years now since this enquiry was finished; during which time the author found no cause to make any material alteration in his theory.*

viii    The P R E F A C E.

*He has shewn it to some of his friends, men of learning and candour, who do not think it wholly unreasonable; and he now ventures to lay it before the public, proposing his notions as probable conjectures, not as things certain and indisputable; and if he has any where expressed himself more positively, it was owing to inattention.*

The

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A

# Philosophical Enquiry

INTO THE

ORIGIN of our IDEAS

OF THE

SUBLIME and BEAUTIFUL.

PART I.

SECT. I.

NOVELTY.

**T**HE first and the simplest emotion which we discover in the human mind, is Curiosity. By curiosity, I mean whatever desire we have for, or whatever pleasure we take in novelty. We see children perpetually running from place to place to hunt out something new; they catch with great eagerness, and with very little choice, at whatever comes before them; their attention is engaged by every thing, because every thing has, in that stage of life, the charm of novelty to recommend it. But as those things which engage us merely by their novelty, cannot attach us for any length of

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time, curiosity is the most superficial of all the affections; it changes its object perpetually; it has an appetite which is very sharp, but very easily satisfied; and it has always an appearance of giddiness, restlessness and anxiety. Curiosity from its nature is a very active principle; it quickly runs over the greatest part of its objects, and soon exhausts the variety which is commonly to be met with in nature; the same things make frequent returns, and they return with less and less of any agreeable effect. In short, the occurrences of life, by the time we come to know it a little, would be incapable of affecting the mind with any other sensations than those of loathing and weariness, if many things were not adapted to affect the mind by means of other powers besides novelty in them, and of other passions besides curiosity in ourselves. These powers and passions shall be considered in their place. But whatever these powers are, or upon what principle soever they affect the mind, it is absolutely necessary that they should not be exerted in those things which a daily and vulgar use have brought into a stale uninteresting familiarity. Some degree of novelty must be one of the materials in every instrument which works upon the mind; and curiosity blends itself more or less with all our passions.

## S E C T. II.

## PAIN and PLEASURE.

**I**T seems then necessary towards moving the passions of people advanced in life to any considerable degree, that the objects designed for that purpose, besides their being in some measure new, should be capable of exciting pain or pleasure from other causes. Pain and pleasure are simple ideas, incapable of definition. People are not liable to be mistaken in their feelings, but they are very frequently wrong in the names they give them, and in their reasonings about them. Many people are of opinion, that pain arises necessarily from the removal of some pleasure; as they think pleasure does from the ceasing or diminution of some pain. For my part I am rather inclined to imagine, that pain and pleasure in their most simple and natural manner of affecting, are each of a positive nature, and by no means necessarily dependent upon each other for their existence. The human mind is often, and I think it is for the most part, in a state neither of pain nor pleasure, which I call a state of indifference. When I am carried from this state into a state of actual pleasure, it does not ap-

pear necessary that I should pass through the medium of any sort of pain. If in such a state of indifference, or ease, or tranquility, or call it what you please, you were to be suddenly entertained with a concert of music; or suppose some object of a fine shape, and bright and lively colours to be presented before you; or imagine your smell is gratified with the fragrance of a rose; or if without any previous thirst you were to drink of some pleasant kind of wine; or to taste of some sweetmeat without being hungry; in all the several senses, of hearing, smelling, and tasting, you undoubtedly find a pleasure: yet if I enquire into the state of your mind previous to these gratifications, you will hardly tell me that they found you in any kind of pain; or having satisfied these several senses with their several pleasures, will you say that any pain has succeeded, though the pleasure is absolutely over? Suppose on the other hand, a man in the same state of indifference, to receive a violent blow, or to drink of some bitter potion, or to have his ears wounded with some harsh and grating sound; here is no removal of pleasure; and yet here is felt, in every sense which is affected, a pain very distinguishable. It may be said perhaps, that the pain in these cases had its



it's rise from the removal of that pleasure which he enjoyed before, though that pleasure was of so low a degree as to be perceived only by the removal; but this seems to me to be a subtilty, that is not discoverable in nature. For if, previous to the pain, I do not feel any actual pleasure, I have no reason to judge that any such thing exists; since pleasure is only pleasure as it is felt. The same may be said of pain, and with equal reason. I can never persuade myself that pleasure and pain are mere relations, which can only exist as they are contrasted: but I think I can discern clearly that there are positive pains and pleasures, which do not at all depend upon each other. Nothing is more certain to my own feelings than this. There is nothing which I can distinguish in my mind with more clearness than the three states, of indifference, of pleasure, and of pain. Every one of these I can perceive without any sort of idea of it's relation to any thing else. Caius is afflicted with a fit of the cholic; this man is actually in pain; stretch Caius upon the rack, he will feel a much greater pain; but does this pain of the rack arise from the removal of any pleasure? or is the fit of the cholic a pleasure or a pain just as we are pleased to consider it?

## S E C T. III.

The difference between the removal of PAIN  
and positive PLEASURE.

**W**E shall carry this proposition yet a step further. We shall venture to propose, that pain and pleasure are not only, not necessarily dependent for their existence on their mutual diminution or removal, but that, in reality, the diminution or ceasing of pleasure does not operate like positive pain; and that the removal or diminution of pain, in it's effect has very little resemblance to positive pleasure.\* The former of these propositions will, I believe, be much more readily allowed than the latter; because it is very evident that pleasure, when it has run it's career, sets us down very nearly where it found us. Pleasure of every kind quickly satisfies; and when it is over, we relapse into indifference, or rather we fall into a soft tranquility, which is tinged with the agreeable colour of the former

\* Mr Locke (essay on human understanding, 1. 2. c. 20. sect. 16.) thinks that the removal or lessening of a pain is considered and operates as a pleasure, and the loss or diminishing of pleasure as a pain. It is this opinion which we consider here.

former sensation. I own, it is not at first view so apparent, that the removal of a great pain does not resemble positive pleasure: but let us recollect in what state we have found our minds upon escaping some imminent danger, or on being released from the severity of some cruel pain. We have on such occasions found, if I am not much mistaken, the temper of our minds in a tenor very remote from that which attends the presence of positive pleasure; we have found them in a state of much sobriety, impressed with a sense of awe, in a sort of tranquility shadowed with horror. The fashion of the countenance and the gesture of the body on such occasions is so correspondent to this state of mind, that any person, a stranger to the cause of the appearance, would rather judge us under some consternation, than in the enjoyment of any thing like positive pleasure.

Ὡς δ' ὅταν ἀνδρ' ἀΐη πυκινὴ λαβῆ, ὅς' ἐνὶ πατρῷ  
 Φῶλα καὶ ἀκλεινας ἄλλον ἐξίκετο δῆμον,  
 Ἄνδρες ἐς ἀφνειῶν θαμβὸς δ' ἔχει εἰσορῶντας.  
 Iliad. 24.

*As when a wretch, who conscious of his crime  
 Pursued for murder from his native clime,  
 Just gains some frontier, breathless, pale, amaz'd;  
 All gaze, all wonder!*

This striking appearance of the man whom Homer supposes to have just escaped an imminent danger, the sort of mixt passion of terror and surprize, with which he affects the spectators, paints very strongly the manner in which we find ourselves affected upon occasions any way similar. For when we have suffered from any violent emotion, the mind naturally continues in something like the same condition, after the cause which first produced it has ceased to operate; the tossing of the sea remains after the storm; and when this remain of horror has entirely subsided, all the passion, which the accident raised, subsides along with it; and the mind returns to it's usual state of indifference. In short, pleasure, (I mean any thing either in the inward sensation, or in the outward appearance like pleasure from a positive cause,) has never, I imagine, it's origin from the removal of pain or danger.

#### S E C T. IV.

Of DELIGHT and PLEASURE, as  
opposed to each other.

**B**UT shall we therefore say, that the removal of pain or it's diminution is always

ways simply painful? or affirm that the cessation or the lessening of pleasure is always attended itself with a pleasure? by no means. What I advance is no more than this; first, that there are pleasures and pains of a positive and independent nature; and secondly, that the feeling which results from the ceasing or diminution of pain does not bear a sufficient resemblance to positive pleasure to have it considered as of the same nature, or to entitle it to be known by the same name; and that upon the same principle the removal or qualification of pleasure has no resemblance to positive pain. It is certain that the former feeling (the removal or moderation of pain) has something in it far from distressing, or disagreeable in it's nature. This feeling, in many cases so agreeable, but in all so different from positive pleasure, has no name which I know; but that hinders not it's being a very real one, and very different from all others. Whenever I have occasion to speak of it, I shall call it *Delight*; and I shall take the best care I can, to use that word in no other sense. I am satisfied the word is not commonly used in this appropriated signification; but I thought it better to take up a word already known, and to limit it's signification, than to introduce a new one which would not perhaps incorporate so well with the language.

guage. I should never have presumed to attempt the least alteration in our words, if the nature of the language, framed for the purposes of business rather than those of philosophy, and the nature of my subject that leads me out of the common track of discourse, did not in a manner necessitate me to it. I shall make use of this liberty with all possible caution. As I make use of the word *Delight* to express the sensation which accompanies the removal of pain or danger; so when I speak of positive pleasure, I shall for the most part call it simply *Pleasure*.

## S E C T. V.

## J O Y and G R I E F.

**I**T must be observed, that the cessation of pleasure affects the mind three ways. If it simply ceases, after having continued a proper time, the effect is *indifference*; if it be abruptly broken off, there ensues an uneasy sense called *disappointment*; if the object be so totally lost that there is no chance of enjoying it again, a passion arises in the mind, which is called *grief*. Now there is none of these, not even grief, which is the most violent, that I think has any resemblance to positive pain.

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The person who grieves, suffers his passion to grow upon him; he indulges it, he loves it: but this never happens in the case of actual pain, which no man ever willingly endured for any considerable time. That grief should be willingly endured, though far from a simply pleasing sensation, is not so difficult to be understood. It is the nature of grief to keep it's object perpetually in it's eye, to present it in it's most pleasurable views, to repeat all the circumstances that attended it, even to the least minuteness, to go back to every particular enjoyment, to dwell upon each, and to find a thousand new perfections in all, that were not sufficiently understood before; in grief, the *pleasure* is still uppermost; and the affliction we suffer has no resemblance to absolute pain, which is always odious, and which we endeavour to shake off as soon as possible. The *Odyssy* of Homer, which abounds with so many natural and affecting images, has none more striking than those which Menelaus raises of the calamitous fate of his friends, and his own manner of feeling it. He owns indeed, that he often gives himself some intermission from such melancholy reflections, but he observes too, that melancholy as they are, they give him pleasure.

Ἀλλ' ἐμπης πάντας ὀδυρόμενος ἢ ἀχέων,  
 Πολλὰ κίς ἐν μέγαρσι καθήμενος ἠμέλεισιν  
 Ἀλλοίε μὲν τε γοῶ φρὴν ἀτερπομαί, ἀλλοίε δ' αὖτε  
 Πάυομαι· ἀψίχως δὲ κοῦρος κρυεῖο γοίσο.

*Still in short intervals of pleasing woe,  
 Regardful of the friendly dues I owe,  
 I to the glorious dead, for ever dear,  
 Indulge the tribute of a grateful tear.*

HOM. Od. 4.

On the other hand, when we recover our health, when we escape an imminent danger, is it with joy that we are affected? The sense on these occasions is far from that smooth and voluptuous satisfaction which the assured prospect of pleasure bestows. The delight which arises from the modifications of pain, confesses the stock from whence it sprung, in its solid, strong, and severe nature.

## S E C T. VI.

Of the passions which belong to SELF-PRESERVATION.

**M**OST of the ideas which are capable of making a powerful impression on the mind, whether simply of Pain or Pleasure,

or



or of the modifications of those, may be reduced very nearly to these two heads, *self-preservation* and *society*; to the ends of one or the other of which all our passions are calculated to answer. The passions which concern self-preservation, turn mostly on *pain* or *danger*. The ideas of *pain*, *sickness*, and *death*, fill the mind with strong emotions of horror; but *life* and *health*, though they put us in a capacity of being affected with pleasure, they make no such impression by the simple enjoyment. The passions therefore which are conversant about the preservation of the individual, turn chiefly on *pain* and *danger*, and they are the most powerful of all the passions.

## S E C T. VII.

### Of the SUBLIME.

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analagous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. When danger or pain  
press

press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as we every day experience. The cause of this I shall endeavour to investigate hereafter.

## S E C T. VIII.

Of the passions which belong to SOCIETY.

**T**HE other head under which I class our passions, is that of *society*, which may be divided into two sorts. 1. The society of the *sexes*, which answers the purposes of propagation; and next, that more *general society*, which we have with men and with other animals, and which we may in some sort be said to have even with the inanimate world. The passions belonging to the preservation of the individual, turn wholly on pain and danger; those which belong to *generation*, have their origin in gratifications and *pleasures*; the pleasure most directly belonging to this purpose is of a lively character, rapturous and violent, and confessedly the highest pleasure of sense; yet the absence of this so great an enjoyment, scarce amounts to an uneasiness; and except

at particular times, I do not think it affects at all. When men describe in what manner they are affected by pain and danger; they do not dwell on the pleasure of health and the comfort of security, and then lament the *loss* of these satisfactions: the whole turns upon the actual pains and horrors which they endure. But if you listen to the complaints of a forsaken lover, you observe, that he insists largely on the pleasures which he enjoyed, or hoped to enjoy, and on the perfection of the object of his desires; it is the *loss* which is always uppermost in his mind. The violent effects produced by love, which has sometimes been even wrought up to madness, is no objection to the rule which we seek to establish. When men have suffered their imaginations to be long affected with any idea, it so wholly engrosses them, as to shut out by degrees almost every other, and to break down every partition of the mind which would confine it. Any idea is sufficient for the purpose, as is evident from the infinite variety of causes which give rise to madness: but this at most can only prove, that the passion of love is capable of producing very extraordinary effects, not that it's extraordinary emotions have any connection with positive pain.

## S E C T. IX.

The final cause of the difference between the passions belonging to SELF-PRESERVATION, and those which regard the SOCIETY of the SEXES.

**T**HE final cause of the difference in character between the passions which regard self-preservation, and those which are directed to the multiplication of the species, will illustrate the foregoing remarks yet further; and it is, I imagine, worthy of observation even upon it's own account. As the performance of our duties of every kind depends upon life, and the performing them with vigour and efficacy depends upon health, we are very strongly affected with whatever threatens the destruction of either; but as we were not made to acquiesce in life and health, the simple enjoyment of them is not attended with any real pleasure, lest satisfied with that, we should give up ourselves to indolence and inaction. On the other hand, the generation of mankind is a great purpose, and it is requisite that men should be animated to the pursuit of it by some great incentive. It is therefore attended with a very high pleasure; but as it is by no means designed to be our constant

constant business, it is not fit that the absence of this pleasure should be attended with any remarkable pain. The difference between men and brutes in this point, seems to be remarkable. Men are at all times pretty equally disposed to the pleasures of love, because they are to be guided by reason in the time and manner of indulging them. Had any great pain arisen from the want of this satisfaction, reason, I am afraid, would find great difficulties in the performance of its office. But brutes who obey laws, in the execution of which their own reason has but little share, have their stated seasons; at such times it is not improbable that the sensation from the want is very troublesome, because the end must be then answered, or be missed in many, perhaps for ever, as the inclination returns only with its season.

## S E C T. X.

## Of B E A U T Y.

**T**H E passion which belongs to generation, merely as such, is lust only; this is evident in brutes, whose passions are more unmixed, and which pursue their purposes more directly than ours. The only distinction

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they observe with regard to their mates, is that of sex. It is true, that they stick severally to their own species in preference to all others; but this preference, I imagine, does not arise from any sense of beauty which they find in their species, as Mr. Addison supposes, but from a law of some other kind to which they are subject; and this we may fairly conclude, from their apparent want of choice amongst those objects to which the barriers of their species have confined them. But man, who is a creature adapted to a greater variety and intricacy of relation, connects with the general passion, the idea of some *social* qualities, which direct and heighten the appetite which he has in common with all other animals; and as he is not designed like them to live at large, it is fit that he should have something to create a preference, and fix his choice; and this in general should be some sensible quality; as no other can so quickly, so powerfully; or so surely produce it's effect. The object therefore of this mixed passion which we call love, is the *beauty* of the *sex*. Men are carried to the sex in general, as it is the sex, and by the common law of nature; but they are attached to particulars by personal *beauty*. I call beauty a social quality; for where women and men, and not only they, but

but when other animals give us a sense of joy and pleasure in beholding them, (and there are many that do so) they inspire us with sentiments of tenderness and affection towards their persons; we like to have them near us, and we enter willingly into a kind of relation with them, unless we should have strong reasons to the contrary. But to what end, in many cases, this was designed, I am unable to discover; for I see no greater reason for a connection between man and several animals who are attired in so engaging a manner, than between him and some others who entirely want this attraction, or possess it in a far weaker degree. But it is probable, that providence did not make even this distinction, but with a view to some great end, though we cannot perceive distinctly what it is, as his wisdom is not our wisdom, nor our ways his ways.

## S E C T. XI.

## SOCIETY and SOLITUDE.

**T**HE second branch of the social passions, is that which administers to *society in general*. With regard to this, I observe, that society, merely as society, without any particular

ticular heightnings, gives us no positive pleasure in the enjoyment; but absolute and entire *solitude*, that is, the total and perpetual exclusion from all society, is as great a positive pain as can almost be conceived. Therefore in the balance between the pleasure of general *society*, and the pain of absolute solitude, *pain* is the predominant idea. But the pleasure of any particular social enjoyment, outweighs very considerably the uneasiness caused by the want of that particular enjoyment; so that the strongest sensations relative to the habits of *particular society*, are sensations of pleasure. Good company, lively conversations, and the endearments of friendship, fill the mind with great pleasure; a temporary solitude on the other hand, is itself agreeable. This may perhaps prove, that we are creatures designed for contemplation as well as action; since solitude as well as society has it's pleasures; as from the former observation we may discern, that an entire life of solitude contradicts the purposes of our being, since death itself is scarcely an idea of more terror.



## S E C T. XII.

SYMPATHY, IMITATION, and  
AMBITION.

**U**NDER this denomination of society, the passions are of a complicated kind, and branch out into a variety of forms agreeably to the great variety of ends they are to serve in the great chain of society. The three principal links in this chain are *sympathy*, *imitation*, and *ambition*.

## S E C T. XIII.

## S Y M P A T H Y.

**I**T is by the first of these passions that we enter into the concerns of others; that we are moved as they are moved, and are never suffered to be indifferent spectators of almost any thing which men can do or suffer. For sympathy must be considered as a sort of substitution, by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in a good measure as he is affected; so that this passion may either partake of the nature of those which regard self-preservation, and turning upon pain may be a source of the sublime;

or it may turn upon ideas of pleasure, and then, whatever has been said of the social affections, whether they regard society in general, or only some particular modes of it, may be applicable here. It is by this principle chiefly that poetry, painting, and other affecting arts, transfuse their passions from one breast to another, and are often capable of grafting a delight on wretchedness, misery, and death itself. It is a common observation, that objects which in the reality would shock, are in tragical and such like representations the source of a very high species of pleasure. This taken as a fact, has been the cause of much reasoning. This satisfaction has been commonly attributed, first, to the comfort we receive in considering that so melancholy a story is no more than a fiction; and next, to the contemplation of our own freedom from the evils which we see represented. I am afraid it is a practice much too common in inquiries of this nature, to attribute the cause of feelings which merely arise from the mechanical structure of our bodies, or from the natural frame and constitution of our minds, to certain conclusions of the reasoning faculty on the objects presented to us; for I have some reason to apprehend, that the influence of reason in producing

ducing our passions is nothing near so extensive as is commonly believed.

#### S E C T. XIV.

The effects of SYMPATHY in the distresses of others.

**T**O examine this point concerning the effect of tragedy in a proper manner, we must previously consider, how we are affected by the feelings of our fellow creatures in circumstances of real distress. I am convinced we have a degree of delight, and that no small one, in the real misfortunes and pains of others; for let the affection be what it will in appearance, if it does not make us shun such objects, if on the contrary it induces us to approach them, if it makes us dwell upon them, in this case I conceive we must have a delight or pleasure of some species or other in contemplating objects of this kind. Do we not read the authentic histories of scenes of this nature with as much pleasure as romances or poems, where the incidents are fictitious? The prosperity of no empire, nor the grandeur of no king, can so agreeably affect in the reading, as the ruin of the state of Macedon, and the distress of it's unhappy prince.

Such a catastrophe touches us in history as much as the destruction of Troy does in fable. Our delight in cases of this kind, is very greatly heightened, if the sufferer be some excellent person who sinks under an unworthy fortune. Scipio and Cato are both virtuous characters; but we are more deeply affected by the violent death of the one, and the ruin of the great cause he adhered to, than with the deserved triumphs and uninterrupted prosperity of the other; for terror is a passion which always produces delight when it does not press too close, and pity is a passion accompanied with pleasure, because it arises from love and social affection. Whenever we are formed by nature to any active purpose, the passion which animates us to it, is attended with delight, or a pleasure of some kind, let the subject matter be what it will; and as our Creator has designed we should be united together by so strong a bond as that of sympathy, he has therefore twisted along with it a proportionable quantity of this ingredient; and always in the greatest proportion where our sympathy is most wanted, in the distresses of others. If this passion was simply painful, we would shun with the greatest care all persons and places that could excite such a passion; as, some who are so far gone in indolence

lence as not to endure any strong impression actually do. But the case is widely different with the greater part of mankind; there is no spectacle we so eagerly pursue, as that of some uncommon and grievous calamity; so that whether the misfortune is before our eyes, or whether they are turned back to it in history, it always touches with delight; but it is not an unmixed delight, but blended with no small uneasiness. The delight we have in such things, hinders us from shunning scenes of misery; and the pain we feel, prompts us to relieve ourselves in relieving those who suffer; and all this antecedent to any reasoning, by an instinct that works us to its own purposes, without our concurrence.

## S E C T. XV.

### Of the effects of TRAGEDY.

**I**T is thus in real calamities. In imitated distresses the only difference is the pleasure resulting from the effects of imitation; for it is never so perfect, but we can perceive it is an imitation, and on that principle are somewhat pleased with it. And indeed in some cases we derive as much or more pleasure from that source than from the thing itself. But then  
I imagine

I imagine we shall be much mistaken if we attribute any considerable part of our satisfaction in tragedy to a consideration that tragedy is a deceit, and its representations no realities. The nearer it approaches the reality, and the further it removes us from all idea of fiction, the more perfect is its power. But be its power of what kind it will, it never approaches to what it represents. Chuse a day on which to represent the most sublime and affecting tragedy which we have; appoint the most favourite actors; spare no cost upon the scenes and decorations; unite the greatest efforts of poetry, painting and music; and when you have collected your audience, just at the moment when their minds are erect with expectation, let it be reported that a state criminal of high rank. is on the point of being executed in the adjoining square; in a moment the emptiness of the theatre would demonstrate the comparative weakness of the imitative arts, and proclaim the triumph of the real sympathy. I believe that this notion of our having a simple pain in the reality, yet a delight in the representation arises from hence, that we do not sufficiently distinguish what we would by no means chuse to do, from what we should be eager enough to see if it was once done. We delight in seeing things, which so far from doing, our heartiest wishes would

be to see redressed. This noble capital, the pride of England and of Europe, I believe no man is so strangely wicked as to desire to see destroyed by a conflagration or an earthquake, though he should be removed himself to the greatest distance from the danger. But suppose such a fatal accident to have happened, what numbers from all parts would crowd to behold the ruins, and amongst them many who would have been content never to have seen London in it's glory? Nor is it either in real or fictitious distresses, our immunity from them which produces our delight; in my own mind I can discover nothing like it. I apprehend that this mistake is owing to a sort of sophism, by which we are frequently imposed upon; it arises from our not distinguishing between what is indeed a necessary condition to our doing or suffering any thing, and what is the *cause* of some particular act. If a man kills me with a sword; it is a necessary condition to this that we should have been both of us alive before the fact; and yet it would be absurd to say, that our being both living creatures was the cause of his crime and of my death. So it is certain, that it is absolutely necessary my life should be out of any imminent hazard before I can take a delight in the sufferings of others, real or imaginary,

or

or indeed in any thing else from any cause whatsoever. But then it is a sophism to argue from thence, that this immunity is the cause of my delight either on these or on any occasions. No one can distinguish such a cause of satisfaction in his own mind I believe; nay when we do not suffer any very acute pain, nor are exposed to any imminent danger of our lives, we can feel for others, whilst we suffer ourselves; and often then most when we are softened by affliction; we see with pity even distresses which we would accept in the place of our own.

## S E C T. XVI.

## I M I T A T I O N.

**T**H E second passion belonging to society is imitation, or, if you will, a desire of imitating, and consequently a pleasure in it. This passion arises from much the same cause with sympathy. For as sympathy makes us take a concern in whatever men feel, so this affection prompts us to copy whatever they do; and consequently we have a pleasure in imitating, and in whatever belongs to imitation merely as it is such, without any intervention of the reasoning faculty, but solely from our natural  
consti-



constitution, which providence has framed in such a manner as to find either pleasure or delight according to the nature of the object, in whatever regards the purposes of our being. It is by imitation far more than by precept that we learn every thing; and what we learn thus we acquire not only more effectually, but more pleasantly. This forms our manners, our opinions, our lives. It is one of the strongest links of society; it is a species of mutual compliance which all men yield to each other, without constraint to themselves, and which is extremely flattering to all. Herein it is that painting and many other agreeable arts have laid one of the principal foundations of their power. I shall here venture to lay down a rule, which may inform us with a good degree of certainty when we are to attribute the power of the arts, to imitation, or to our pleasure of the skill of the imitator merely, and when to sympathy, or some other cause in conjunction with it. When the object represented in poetry or painting is such, as we could have no desire of seeing in reality; then I may be sure that it's power in poetry or painting is owing to the power of imitation, and to no cause operating in the thing itself. So it is with most of the pieces which the painters call Still life. In these a cottage, a dunghill, the meanest and most ordi-

ordinary utensils of the kitchen, are capable of giving us pleasure. But when the object of the painting or poem is such as we should run to see if real, let it affect us with what odd sort of sense it will, we may rely upon it, that the power of the poem or picture is more owing to the nature of the thing itself than to the mere effect of imitation, or to a consideration of the skill of the imitator however excellent. Aristotle has spoken so much and so solidly upon the force of imitation in his poetics, that it makes any further discourse upon this subject the less necessary.

## S E C T. XVII.

## A M B I T I O N.

**A**LTHO' imitation is one of the great instruments used by providence in bringing our nature towards it's perfection, yet if men gave themselves up to imitation entirely, and each followed the other, and so on in an eternal circle, it is easy to see that there never could be any improvement amongst them. Men must remain as brutes do, the same at the end that they are at this day, and that they were in the beginning of the world. To prevent this, God has planted in man a  
sense

sense of ambition, and a satisfaction arising from the contemplation of his excelling his fellows in something deemed valuable amongst them. It is this passion that drives men to all the ways we see in use of signaling themselves, and that tends to make whatever excites in a man the idea of this distinction so very pleasant. It has been so strong as to make very miserable men take comfort that they were supreme in misery; and certain it is, that where we cannot distinguish ourselves by something excellent, we begin to take a complacency in some singular infirmities, follies, or defects of one kind or other. It is on this principle that flattery is so prevalent; for flattery is no more than what raises in a man's mind an idea of a preference which he has not. Now whatever either on good or upon bad grounds tends to raise a man in his own opinion, produces a sort of swelling and triumph that is extremely grateful to the human mind; and this swelling is never more perceived, nor operates with more force, than when without danger we are conversant with terrible objects, the mind always claiming to itself some part of the dignity and importance of the objects with which it is conversant; hence proceeds what Longinus has observed of that glorying and sense of inward great-

greatness, that always fills the reader of such passages in poets and orators as are sublime; it is what every man must have felt in himself upon such occasions.

## S E C T. XVIII.

## The RECAPITULATION.

**T**O draw the whole of what has been said into a few distinct points. The passions which belong to self preservation, turn on pain and danger; they are simply painful when their causes immediately affect us; they are delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger, without being actually in such circumstances; this delight I have not called pleasure, because it turns on pain, and because it is different enough from any idea of positive pleasure. Whatever excites this delight, I call *sublime*. The passions belonging to self-preservation are the strongest of all the passions.

## S E C T. XIX.

**T**HE second head to which the passions are referred in relation to their final cause, is society. There are two sorts of societies. The first is, the society of sex. The passion belonging to this is called love, and it contains a mixture of lust; its object is the beauty of women. The other is the great society with man and all other animals. The passion subservient to this is called likewise love, but it has no mixture of lust, and its object is beauty; which is a name I shall apply to all such qualities in things as induce in us a sense of affection and tenderness, or some other passion the most nearly resembling these. The passion of love has its rise in positive pleasure; it is, like all things which grow out of pleasure, capable of being mixed with a mode of uneasiness, that is, when an idea of its object is excited in the mind with an idea at the same time of having irretrievably lost it. This mixed sense of pleasure I have not called *pain*, because it turns upon actual pleasure, and because it is both in its cause and in most of its effects of a nature altogether different.

## S E C T. XX.

The same.

**N**EXT to the general passion we have for society, to a choice in which we are directed by the pleasure we have in the object, the particular passion under this head called sympathy has the greatest extent. The nature of this passion is to put us in the place of another in whatever circumstance he is in, and to affect us in a like manner; so that this passion may, as the occasion requires, turn either on pain or pleasure; but with the modifications mentioned in some cases in sect. IX. As to imitation and preference nothing more need be said.

## S E C T. XXI.

The CONCLUSION.

**I** Believed that an attempt to range and methodize some of our most leading passions would be a good preparative to an enquiry of the nature of that which is to be attempted in the ensuing discourse. The passions I have  
mentioned

mentioned are almost the only ones which it can be necessary to our present design to consider; though the variety of the passions is great, and worthy in every branch of that variety of an attentive investigation. The more accurately we search into the human mind, the stronger traces we every where find of his wisdom who made it. If a discourse on the use of the parts of the body may be considered as an hymn to the Creator; the use of the passions, which are the organs of the mind, cannot be barren of praise to him, nor unproductive to ourselves of that noble and uncommon union of science, and admiration, which a contemplation of the works of infinite wisdom alone can afford to a rational mind; whilst referring to him whatever we find of right, or good, or fair in ourselves, discovering his strength and wisdom even in our own weakness and imperfection, honouring them where we discover them clearly, and adoring their profundity where we are lost in our search, we may be inquisitive without impertinence, and elevated without pride; we may be admitted, if I may dare to say so, into the counsels of the Almighty by a consideration of his works. This elevation of the mind ought to be the principal end of all our studies, which

if they do not in some measure effect, they are of very little service to us. But besides this great purpose, a consideration of the rationale of our passions seems to me very necessary for all who would affect them upon solid and sure principles. It is not enough to know them in general; to affect them after a delicate manner, or to judge properly of any work designed to affect them, we should know the exact boundaries of their several jurisdictions; we should pursue them through all their variety of operations, and pierce into the inmost, and what might appear inaccessible parts of our nature,

*Quod latet arcanâ non enarrabile fibrâ.*

Without all this it is possible for a man after a confused manner, sometimes to satisfy his own mind of the truth of his work; but he never can have a certain determinate rule to go by, nor can he ever make his propositions sufficiently clear to others. Poets, and orators, and painters, and those who cultivate other branches of the liberal arts, have without this critical knowledge succeeded well in their several provinces, and will succeed; as among artificers there are many machines made and even invented without any exact knowledge of  
the



the principles they are governed by. It is, I own, not uncommon to be wrong in theory and right in practice; and we are happy that it is so. Men often act right from their feelings, who afterwards reason but ill on them from principle; but as it is impossible to avoid an attempt at such reasoning, and equally impossible to prevent its having some influence on our practice, surely it is worth taking some pains to have it just, and founded on the basis of sure experience. The artists themselves, who might be most relied on here, have been too much occupied in the practice; the philosophers have done little, and what they have done, was mostly with a view to their own schemes and systems; and as for those called critics, they have generally fought the rule of the arts in the wrong place; they fought it among poems, pictures, engravings, statues and buildings. But art can never give the rules that make an art. This is, I believe, the reason why artists in general, and poets principally, have been confined in so narrow a circle; they have been rather imitators of one another than of nature; and this with so faithful an uniformity, and to so remote an antiquity, that it is hard to say who gave the first model. Critics follow them, and therefore can do little as

guides. I can judge but poorly of any thing whilst I measure it by no other standard than itself. The true standard of the arts is in every man's power ; and an easy observation of the commonest, sometimes of the meanest things in nature, will give the truest lights, where the greatest sagacity and industry that flights such observation, must leave us in the dark, or what is worse, amuse and mislead us by false lights. In an enquiry, it is almost every thing to be once in a right road. I am satisfied I have done but little by these observations considered in themselves, and I never should have taken the pains to digest them, much less should I have ever ventured to publish them, if I was not convinced that nothing tends more to the corruption of science than to suffer it to stagnate. These waters must be troubled before they can exert their virtues. A man who works beyond the surface of things, though he may be wrong himself, yet clears the way for others, and may chance to make even his errors subservient to the cause of truth. In the following parts, I shall enquire what things they are that cause in us the affections of the sublime and beautiful, as in this I have considered the affections themselves. I only desire one favour ; that no part of this discourse  
may

may be judged of by itself, and independently of the rest; for I am sensible I have not disposed my materials to abide the test of a captious controversy, but of a sober and even forgiving examination; that they are not armed at all points for battle; but dressed to visit those who are willing to give a peaceful entrance to truth.

The end of the first Part.





A

# Philosophical Enquiry

INTO THE

ORIGIN of our IDEAS

OF THE

SUBLIME and BEAUTIFUL.

PART. II.

SECT. I.

Of the passion caused by the SUBLIME.

**T**HE passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*, when those causes operate most powerfully, is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. \* In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which em-

\* Part 1. sect. 3, 4, 7.

employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force. Astonishment, as I have said, is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree; the inferior effects are admiration, reverence and respect.

## S E C T. II.

### T E R R O R.

**N**O passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear. § For fear being an apprehension of pain or death, it operates in a manner that resembles actual pain. Whatever therefore is terrible, with regard to fight, is sublime too, whether this cause of terror, be endued with greatness of dimensions or not; for it is impossible to look on any thing as trifling, or contemptible, that may be dangerous. There are many animals, who though far from being large, are yet capable of raising ideas of the sublime, because they are considered as objects of terror. As serpents and poisonous animals of almost all

§ Part 4. sect. 3, 4, 5, 6.

kinds.

kinds. Even to things of great dimensions, if we annex any adventitious idea of terror, they become without comparison greater. An even plain of a vast extent on land, is certainly no mean idea ; the prospect of such a plain may be as extensive as a prospect of the ocean ; but can it ever fill the mind with any thing so great as the ocean itself ? this is owing to several causes, but it is owing to none more than to this, that the ocean is an object of no small terror.

## S E C T. III.

## O B S C U R I T Y.

**T**O make any thing very terrible, obscurity † seems in general to be necessary. When we know the full extent of any danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of the apprehension vanishes. Every one will be sensible of this, who considers how greatly night adds to our dread, in all cases of danger, and how much the notions of ghosts and goblins, of which none can form clear ideas, affect minds, which give credit to the popular tales concerning such sorts of beings.

† Part 4. sect. 14, 15, 16.

Those despotic governments, which are founded on the passions of men, and principally upon the passion of fear, keep their chief as much as may be from the public eye. The policy has been the same in many cases of religion. Almost all the heathen temples were dark. Even in the barbarous temples of the Americans at this day, they keep their idol in a dark part of the hut, which is consecrated to his worship. For this purpose too the druids performed all their ceremonies in the bosom of the darkest woods, and in the shade of the oldest and most spreading oaks. No person seems to have understood the secret of heightening, or of setting terrible things, if I may use the expression, in their strongest light by the force of a judicious obscurity, than Milton. His description of Death in the second book is admirably studied; it is astonishing with what a gloomy pomp, with what a significant and expressive uncertainty of strokes and colouring he has finished the portrait of the king of terrors.

*The other shape,*  
*If shape it might be called that shape had none*  
*Distinguishable, in member, joint, or limb;*  
*Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,*



*For each seemed either ; black he stood as night ;  
Fierce as ten furies ; terrible as hell ;  
And shook a deadly dart. What seemed his head  
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.*

In this description all is dark, uncertain, confused, terrible, and sublime to the last degree.

#### S E C T. IV.

Of the difference between CLEARNESS and OBSCURITY with regard to the passions.

**I**T is one thing to make an idea clear, and another to make it *affecting* to the imagination. If I make a drawing of a palace or a temple, or a landscape, I present a very clear idea of those objects ; but then (allowing for the effect of imitation which is something) my picture can at most affect only as the palace, temple, or landscape would have affected in the reality. On the other hand, the most lively and spirited verbal description I can give, raises a very obscure and imperfect *idea* of such objects ; but then it is in my power to raise a stronger *emotion* by the description than I could do by the best painting. This experience constantly evinces. The proper manner of conveying the  
*affections*

*affections* of the mind from one to another, is by words; there is a great insufficiency in all other methods of communication; nay so far is a clearness of imagery from being absolutely necessary to an influence upon the passions, that they may be considerably operated upon without presenting any image at all, by certain sounds adapted to that purpose; of which we have a sufficient proof in the acknowledged and powerful effects of instrumental music. In reality a great clearness helps but little towards affecting the passions, as it is in some sort an enemy to all enthusiasms whatsoever.

## S E C T. V.

The same subject continued.

T H E R E are two verses in Horace's art of poetry that seem to contradict this opinion, for which reason I shall take a little more pains in clearing it up. The verses are,

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures  
Quam quæ sunt oculis subiecta fidelibus.*

On this the abbe du Bos founds a criticism, wherein he gives painting the preference to poetry in the article of moving the passions;  
and

and that on account principally of the greater *clearness* of the ideas it represents. I believe this excellent judge was led into this mistake, (if it be a mistake) by his system, to which he found it more conformable than I imagine it will be found to experience. I know several who admire and love painting, and yet who regard the objects of their admiration in that art, with coolness enough, in comparison of that warmth with which they are animated by affecting pieces of poetry or rhethoric. Among the common sort of people, I never could perceive that painting had much influence on their passions. It is true that the best sorts of painting, as well as the best sorts of poetry, are not much understood in that sphere. But it is most certain, that their passions are very strongly roused by a fanatic preacher, or by the ballads of Chevy-chase, or the children in the wood, and by other little popular poems and tales that are current in that rank of life. I do not know of any paintings, bad or good, that produce the same effect. So that poetry with all its obscurity, has a more general as well as a more powerful dominion over the passions than the other art. And I think there are reasons in nature why the obscure idea, when properly conveyed, should be more affecting than the clear. It is our ignorance of things that

causes all our admiration, and chiefly excites our passions. Knowledge and acquaintance make the most striking causes affect but little. It is thus with the vulgar, and all men are as the vulgar in what they do not understand. The ideas of eternity, and infinity, are among the most affecting we have, and yet perhaps there is nothing of which we really understand so little, as of infinity and eternity. We don't any where meet a more sublime description than this justly celebrated one of Milton, wherein he gives the portrait of Satan with a dignity so suitable to the subject.

*He above the rest*

*In shape and gesture proudly eminent  
 Stood like a tower; his form had yet not lost  
 All her original brightness, nor appeared  
 Less than archangel ruin'd, and th' excess  
 Of glory obscured: as when the sun new ris'n  
 Looks through the horizontal misty air  
 Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon  
 In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds  
 On half the nations; and with fear of change  
 Perplexes monarchs.*

Here is a very noble picture; and in what does this poetical picture consist? in images of a tower, an archangel, the sun rising through  
 mists

mists, or in an eclipse, the ruin of monarchs, and the revolutions of kingdoms. The mind is hurried out of itself, by a croud of great and confused images ; which affect because they are crouded and confused. For separate them, and you lose much of the greatness, and join them, and you infallibly lose the clearness. The images raised by poetry are always of this obscure kind ; though in general the effects of poetry, are by no means to be attributed to the images it raises ; which point we shall examine more at large hereafter.\* But painting, with only the superadded pleasure of imitation, can only affect simply by the images it presents ; but even in painting a judicious obscurity in some things contributes to the effect of the picture ; because the images in painting are exactly similar to those in nature ; and in nature dark, confused, uncertain images have a greater power on the fancy to form the grander passions than those which are more clear and determinate. But where and when this observation may be applied to practice, and how far it shall be extended, will be better deduced from the nature of the subject, and from the occasion, than from any rules that can be given.

\* Part 5.

## S E C T. VI.

## P R I V A T I O N.

**A**LL general privations are great, because they are all terrible; *Vacuity, Darknefs, Solitude and Silence.* With what a fire of imagination, yet with what severity of judgment, has Virgil amassed all these circumstances where he knows that all the images of a tremendous dignity ought to be united, at the mouth of hell! where before he unlocks the secrets of the great deep, he seems to be seized with a religious horror, and to retire astonished at the boldness of his own design.

*Dii quibus imperium est animarum, umbræq; silentes!  
Et Chaos, et Phlegeton! loca nocte silentia late?  
Sit mihi fas audita loqui! sit numine vestro  
Pandere res alta terra et caligine mersas!  
Ibant obscuro, sola sub nocte, per umbram,  
Perque domos dites vacuas, et inania regna.*

*Ye subterraneous gods! whose awful sway  
The gliding ghosts, and silent shades obey;  
O Chaos hoar! and Phlegethon profound!  
Whose solemn empire stretches wide around;*

*Give*

*Give me, ye great tremendous powers, to tell  
Of scenes and wonders in the depths of hell;  
Give me your mighty secrets to display  
From those black realms of darkness to the day.*

PITT.

*Obscure they went through dreary shades that led  
Along the waste dominions of the dead.*

DRYDEN.

## S E C T. VII.

### V A S T N E S S.

**G**REATNESS † of dimension, is a powerful cause of the sublime. This is too evident, and the observation too common, to need any illustration; but it is not so common, to consider in what ways greatness of dimension, vastness of extent, or quantity, has the most striking effect. For certainly; there are ways, and modes, wherein the same quantity of extension shall produce greater effects than it is found to do in others. Extension is either in length, height, or depth. Of these the length strikes least; an hundred yards of even ground will never work such an effect as a tower an hundred yards high, or a rock or mountain of

† Part 4. sect. 9.

that altitude. I am apt to imagine likewise, that height is less grand than depth; and that we are more struck at looking down from a precipice, than at looking up at an object of equal height; but of that I am not very positive. A perpendicular has more force in forming the sublime, than an inclined plane; and the effects of a rugged and broken surface seem stronger than where it is smooth and polished. It would carry us out of our way to enter into the cause of these appearances here; but certain it is they afford a large and fruitful field of speculation.

### S E C T. VIII.

### I N F I N I T Y.

**A**NOTHER source of the sublime, is *infinity*; if it does not rather in some sort belong to the last. Infinity has a tendency to fill the mind with that sort of delightful horror, which is the most genuine effect, and truest test of the sublime. There are scarce any things which can become the objects of our senses that are really, and in their own nature infinite. But the eye not being able to perceive the bounds of many things, they seem to be infinite, and they produce the  
same



same effects as if they were really so. We are deceived in the like manner, if the parts of some large object, are so continued to any indefinite number, that the imagination meets no check which may hinder its extending them at pleasure.

## S E C T. IX.

The same.

**W**HENEVER we repeat any idea frequently, the mind by a sort of mechanism repeats it long after the first cause has ceased to operate \*. After whirling about; when we sit down, the objects about us still seem to whirl. After a long succession of noises, as the fall of waters, or the beating of forge hammers, the hammers beat and the water roars in the imagination long after the first sounds have ceased to affect it; and they die away at last by gradations which are scarcely perceptible. If you hold up a strait pole, with your eye to one end, it will seem extended to an almost an incredible length. Place a number of uniform and equidistant marks on this pole, they will cause the same deception, and

\* Part 4. sect. 12.

seem multiplied without end. The senses strongly affected in some one manner, cannot quickly change their tenor, or adapt themselves to other things; but they continue in their old channel until the strength of the first mover decays. This is the reason of an appearance very frequent in madmen; that they remain whole days and nights, sometimes whole years, in the constant repetition of some remark, some complaint, or song; which having struck powerfully on their disordered imagination, in the beginning of their phrensy, every repetition reinforces it with new strength; and the hurry of their spirits unrestrained, the curb of reason continues it to the end of their lives.

## S E C T. X.

## SUCCESSION and UNIFORMITY.

**S**UCCESION and *uniformity* of parts, are what constitute the artificial infinite.

1. *Succession*; which is requisite that the parts may be continued so long, and in such a direction, as by their frequent impulses on the sense to impress the imagination with an idea of their progress beyond their actual limits.

§ Part 4. sect. 14.

2. *Uni-*

2. *Uniformity*; because if the figure of the parts should be changed, the imagination at every change finds a check; you are presented at every alteration with the termination of one idea, and the beginning of another; by which means it becomes impossible to continue that uninterrupted progression, which alone can stamp on bounded objects the character of infinity. † It is in this kind of artificial infinity, I believe, we ought to look for the cause why a rotund has such a noble effect. For in a rotund, whether it be a building or a plantation, you can no where fix a boundary; turn which way you will, the same object still seems to continue, and the imagination has no rest. But the parts must be uniform as well as circularly disposed, to give this figure its full force; because any difference, whether it be in the disposition, or in the figure, or even in the colour of the parts, is highly prejudicial to the idea of infinity, which every change must check and interrupt, at every alteration commencing a new series.

† Mr. Addison in the Spectators concerning the pleasures of the imagination, thinks it is because in the rotund at one glance you see half the building. This I do not imagine to be the real cause.

## S E C T. XI.

The effect of succession and uniformity in  
B U I L D I N G.

**O**N the same principles of succession and uniformity, the grand appearance of the ancient heathen temples, which were generally oblong forms, with a range of uniform pillars on every side, will be easily accounted for. From the same cause may be derived the grand effect of the isles in many of our own old cathedrals. The form of a cross used in some churches seems to me not so eligible, as the parallelogram of the ancients; at least I imagine it is not so proper for the outside. For, supposing the arms of the cross every way equal, if you stand in a direction parallel to any of the side walls, or colonnades, instead of a deception that makes the building more extended than it is, you are cut off from a considerable part (two thirds) of its *actual* length; and to prevent all possibility of progression, the arm of the cross taking a new direction, makes a right angle with the beam, and thereby wholly turns the imagination from the repetition of the former idea. Or suppose the spectator placed where he may take a direct  
view

view of such a building; what will be the consequence? the necessary consequence must be, that a good part of the basis of each angle, formed by the intersection of the arms of the cross, must be inevitably lost; the whole must of course assume a broken unconnected figure; the lights must be unequal, here strong, and there weak; without that noble gradation, which the perspective always effects on parts disposed uninterruptedly in a right line. Some or all of these objections, will lie against every figure of a cross, in whatever view you take it. I exemplified them in the Greek cross in which these faults appear the most strongly; but they appear in some degree in all sorts of crosses. Indeed there is nothing more prejudicial to the grandeur of buildings, than to abound in angles; a fault obvious in very many; and owing to an inordinate thirst for variety, which, whenever it prevails, is sure to leave very little true taste.

## S E C T. XII.

## Magnitude in BUILDING.

**T**O the sublime in building, greatness of dimension seems requisite ; for on a few parts, and those small, the imagination cannot rise to any idea of infinity. No greatness in the manner can effectually compensate for the want of proper dimensions. There is no danger of drawing men into extravagant designs by this rule ; it carries its own caution along with it. Because too great a length in building destroys the purpose of greatness, which it was intended to promote, as the perspective will lessen it in height as it gains in length, and will bring it at last to a point ; turning the whole figure into a sort of triangle, the poorest in its effect of almost any figure, that can be presented to the eye. I have ever observed, that colonnades and avenues of trees of a moderate length, were without comparison far grander, than when they were suffered to run to immense distances. A true artist should put a generous deceit on the spectators, and effect the noblest designs by easy methods. Designs that are vast only by their dimensions, are always the sign of a  
common

common and low imagination. No work of art can be great, but as it deceives; to be otherwise is the prerogative of nature only. A good eye will fix the medium betwixt an excessive length, or height, (for the same objection lies against both), and a short or broken quantity; and perhaps it might be ascertained to a tolerable degree of exactness, if it was my purpose to descend far into the particulars of any art.

### S E C T. XIII.

#### INFINITY in pleasing OBJECTS.

**I**NFINITY, though of another kind, causes much of our pleasure in agreeable, as well as of our delight in sublime images. The spring is the pleafantest of the seasons; and the young of most animals, though far from being compleatly fashioned, afford a more agreeable sensation than the full grown; because the imagination is entertained with the promise of something more, and does not acquiesce in the present object of the sense. In unfinished sketches of drawing, I have seen something which pleased me beyond the best finishing; and this I believe proceeds from the cause I have just now assigned.

#### S E C T.

## S E C T. XIV.

## D I F F I C U L T Y.

\* **A**NOTHER source of greatness is *Difficulty*. When any work seems to have required immense force and labour to effect it, the idea is grand. Stonehenge, neither for disposition nor ornament, has any thing admirable; but those huge rude masses of stone, set on end, and piled each on other, turn the mind on the immense force necessary for such a work. Nay the rudeness of the work increases this cause of grandeur, as it excludes the idea of art, and contrivance; for dexterity produces another sort of effect which is different enough from this.

## S E C T. XV.

## M A G N I F I C E N C E.

**M***agnificence* is likewise a source of the sublime. A great profusion of any things which are splendid or valuable in themselves, is *magnificent*. The starry heaven, though it occurs

\* Part 4. sect. 4, 5, 6.



so very frequently to our view, never fails to excite an idea of grandeur. This cannot be owing to any thing in the stars themselves, separately considered. The number is certainly the cause. The apparent disorder augments it, for the appearance of care is highly contrary to our ideas of magnificence. Besides, the stars lye in such apparent confusion, as make it impossible on ordinary occasions to reckon them. This gives them the advantage of a sort of infinity. In works of art, this kind of grandeur, which consists in multitude, is to be very cautiously admitted; because, first, a profusion of excellent things is not to be attained, or with too great difficulty; secondly, because in many cases it would destroy all use, which should be attended to in most of the works of art with the greatest care; and with regard to disorder in the disposition, it is to be considered, that unless you can produce an appearance of infinity by your disorder, you will have disorder only without magnificence. There are, however, a sort of fireworks, and some other things, that in this way succeed well, and are truly grand.

## S E C T. XVI.

## L I G H T.

**H**AVING considered extension, so far as it is capable of raising ideas of greatness; *colour* comes next under consideration. All colours depend on *light*. Light therefore ought previously to be examined, and with it, its opposite, darkness. With regard to light; to make it a cause capable of producing the sublime, it must be attended with some circumstances, besides its bare faculty of shewing other objects. Mere light is too common a thing to make a strong impression on the mind, and without a strong impression nothing can be sublime. But such a light as that of the sun, immediately exerted on the eye, as it overpowers the sense, is a very great idea. Light of an inferior strength to this, if it moves with great celerity, has the same power; for lightning is certainly productive of grandeur, which it owes chiefly to the extreme velocity of its motion. A quick transition from light to darkness, or from darkness to light, has yet a greater effect. But darkness is more productive of sublime ideas than light, as has been suggested in the second section of this part.

S E C T.

## S E C T XVII.

## Light in BUILDING.

**A**S the management of light is a matter of importance in architecture, it is worth enquiring, how far this remark is applicable to that purpose. I think then, that all edifices calculated to produce an idea of the sublime, ought rather to be dark and gloomy, and this for two reasons; the first is, that darkness itself on other occasions is known by experience to have a greater effect on the passions than light. The second is, that to make an object very striking, we should make it as different as possible from the objects with which we have been immediately conversant; when therefore you enter a building, you cannot pass into a greater light than you had in the open air; to go into one some few degrees less, can make only a trifling change; but to make the transition thoroughly striking, you ought to pass from the greatest light, to as much darkness as is consistent with the uses of architecture. At night the contrary rule will hold, but for the very same reason; and the more highly a room is then illuminated, the grander will the passion be.

S E C T.

## S E C T. XVIII.

COLOUR considered as productive of the  
S U B L I M E.

**A**MONG colours, such as are soft, or cheerful, (except perhaps a strong red which is cheerful) are unfit to produce grand images. An immense mountain covered with a shining green turf, is nothing in this respect, to one dark and gloomy; the cloudy sky is more grand than the blue; and night more sublime and solemn than day. Therefore in historical painting, a gay or gaudy drapery, can never have a happy effect: and in buildings, when the highest degree of the sublime is intended, the materials and ornaments ought neither to be white, nor green, nor yellow, nor blue, nor of a pale red, nor violet, nor spotted, but of sad and fuscous colours, as black, or brown, or deep purple, and the like. Much of gilding, mosaics, painting or statues, contribute but little to the sublime. This rule need not be put in practice, except where an uniform degree of the most striking sublimity is to be produced, and that in every particular; for it ought to be observed, that this melancholy kind of greatness, though it be certainly  
the

the highest, ought not to be studied in all sorts of edifices, where yet grandeur must be studied; in such cases the sublimity must be drawn from the other sources; with a strict caution however against any thing light and riant; as nothing so effectually deadens the whole taste of the sublime.

## S E C T. XVIII.

## SOUND and LOUDNESS.

**T**HE eye is not the only organ of sensation, by which a sublime passion may be produced. Sounds have a great power in these as in most other passions. I do not mean words, because words do not affect simply by their sounds, but by means altogether different. Excessive loudness alone is sufficient to overpower the soul, to suspend its action, and to fill it with terror. The noise of vast cataracts, raging storms, thunder, or artillery, awakes a great and awful sensation in the mind, though we can observe no nicety or artifice in those sorts of music. The shouting of multitudes has a similar effect; and by the sole strength of the sound, so amazes and confounds the imagination, that in this staggering, and hurry of the mind, the best established tempers can scarcely forbear being born  
 F down,

down, and joining in the common cry, and common resolution of the croud.

### S E C T. XIX.

#### S U D D E N N E S S.

**A** Sudden beginning, or sudden cessation of sound of any considerable force, has the same power. The attention is roused by this ; and the faculties driven forward, as it were, on their guard. Whatever either in sights or sounds makes the transition from one extreme to the other easy, causes no terror, and consequently can be no cause of greatness. In every thing sudden and unexpected, we are apt to start ; that is, we have a perception of danger, and our nature rouses us to guard against it. It may be observed, that a single sound of some strength, though but of short duration, if repeated after intervals, has a grand effect. Few things are more awful than the striking of a great clock, when the silence of the night prevents the attention from being too much dissipated. The same may be said of a single stroke on a drum, repeated with pauses ; and of the successive firing of cannon at a distance ; all the effects mentioned in this section have causes very nearly alike.

S E C T.

## S E E T. XX.

## I N T E R M I T T I N G.

**A** LOW, tremulous, intermitting sound, though it seems in some respects opposite to that just mentioned, is productive of the sublime. It is worth while to examine this a little. The fact itself must be determined by every man's own experience, and reflection only. I have already observed, that † night increases our terror more perhaps than any thing else; it is our nature, that, when we do not know what may happen to us, to fear the worst that can happen us; and hence it is, that uncertainty is so terrible, that we often seek to be rid of it, at the hazard of a certain mischief. Now some low, confused, uncertain sounds, leave us in the same fearful anxiety concerning their causes, that no light, or an uncertain light does concerning the objects that surround us.

*Quale per incertam lunam sub luce maligna  
Est iter in silvis.—*

— *A faint shadow of uncertain light,  
Like as a lamp, whose life doth fade away;*

† Sect. 3.

*Or as the moon cloathed with cloudy night  
Doth shew to him who walks in fear and great  
affright.* SPENSER.

But a light now appearing, and now leaving us, and so off and on, is even more terrible than total darkness; and a sort of uncertain sounds are, when the necessary dispositions concur, more alarming than a total silence.

## S E C T. XXI.

The cries of A N I M A L S.

**S**UCH sounds as imitate the natural inarticulate voices of men, or any other animals in pain or danger, are capable of conveying great ideas; unless it be the well known voice of some creature, on which we are used to look with contempt. The angry tones of wild beasts are equally capable of causing a great and awful sensation.

*Hinc exaudiri gemitus, iræque leonum  
Vincla recusantum, et sera sub nocte rudentum;  
Setigerique fues, atque in pressepibus urfi  
Sævire; et formæ magnorum ululare luporum.*

It might seem that these modulations of sound carry some connexion with the nature of the things



things they represent, and are not merely arbitrary; because the natural cries of all animals, even of those animals with whom we have not been acquainted, never fail to make themselves sufficiently understood; this cannot be said of language. The modifications of sound, which may be productive of the sublime, are almost infinite. Those I have mentioned, are only a few instances to shew, on what principle they are all built.

## S E C T. XXIII.

SMELL and TASTE. BITTERS  
and STENCHES.

**S**MELLS, and *Tastes*, have some share too, in ideas of greatness; but it is a small one, weak in its nature, and confined in its operations. I shall only observe, that no smells or tastes can produce a grand sensation, except excessive bitters, and intolerable stench. It is true, that these affections of the smell and taste, when they are in their full force, and lean directly upon the sensory, are simply painful, and accompanied with no sort of delight; but when they are moderated, as in a description or narrative, they become sources of the sublime as genuine as any other, and upon the very same principle of a moderated pain. “A cup of bitter-

“ nefs ;” to drain the bitter cup of fortune ;”  
 “ the bitter apples of Sodom.” These are all  
 ideas fuitable to a fublime defcription. Nor is this  
 paffage of Virgil without fublimity, where the  
 ftench of the vapour in Albunea confpires fo  
 happily with the facred horror and gloominefs  
 of that prophetic foreft.

*At rex follicitus monftrorum oracula fauni  
 Fatidici genitoris adit, lucosque fub alta  
 Confulit Albunea, nemorum quæ maxima facro  
 Fonte fonat ; fævamq; exhalat opaca Mephitim.*

In the fixth book, and in a very fublime de-  
 fcription, the poisonous exhalation of Ache-  
 on is not forgot, nor does it at all difagree  
 with the other images amongft which it is  
 introduced.

*Spelunca alta fuit, vaftoque immanis hiatu  
 Scrupea, tuta lacu nigro, nemorumque tenebris  
 Quam fuper haud ullæ poterant impune volantes  
 Tendere iter pennis, talis feffe halitus atris  
 Faucibus effundens fupera ad convexa ferebat.*

I have added thefe examples, becaufe fome friends  
 to whofe judgment I defer were of opinion, that  
 if the fentiment flood nakedly by itfelf, it would  
 be fubject at firft view to burlefque and ridicule ;

but

but this I imagine would principally arise from considering the bitterness and stench in company with mean and contemptible ideas, with which it must be owned they are often united; such an union degrades the sublime in all other instances as well as in those. But it is one of the tests by which the sublimity of an image is to be tried, not whether it becomes mean when associated with mean ideas; but whether, when united with images of an allowed grandeur, the whole composition is supported with dignity. Things which are terrible are always great; but when things possess disagreeable qualities, or such as have indeed some degree of danger, but of a danger easily overcome, they are merely *odious* as toads and spiders.

## S E C T. XXIV:

## F E E L I N G. P A I N.

**O**F *Feeling* little more can be said, than that the idea of bodily pain, in all the the modes and degrees of labour, pain, anguish, torment, is productive of the sublime; and nothing else in this sense can produce it. I need not give here any fresh instances, as those given in the former sections abundantly il-

illustrate a remark, that in reality wants only an attention to nature, to be made by every body.

Having thus run through the causes of the sublime with reference to all the senses, my first observation, (sect. 7) will be found very nearly true; that the sublime is an idea belonging to self-preservation. That it is therefore one of the most affecting we have. That its strongest emotion is an emotion of distress, and that no † positive or absolute pleasure belongs to it. Numberless examples besides those mentioned, might be brought in support of these truths, and many perhaps useful consequences drawn from them.—

*Sed fugit interea, fugit irrevocabile tempus,  
Singula dum capti circumvectamur amore.*

† Vide sect. 6. part 1.



A

# Philosophical Enquiry

INTO THE

ORIGIN of our IDEAS

OF THE

SUBLIME and BEAUTIFUL.

PART III.

OF BEAUTY.

SECT. I.

**I**T is my design to consider beauty as distinguished from the sublime ; and in the course of the enquiry, to examine how far it is consistent with it. But previous to this, we must take a short review of the opinions already entertained of this quality ; which I think are hardly to be reduced to any fixed principles ; because men are used to talk of beauty in a figurative manner, that is to say, in a manner extremely uncertain, and indeterminate. By beauty I mean, that quality

lity or those qualities in bodies by which they cause love, or some passion similar to it.

## S E C T. II.

### Proportion not the cause of BEAUTY in V E G E T A B L E S.

**B**EAUTY is usually said to consist in certain proportions of parts ; on considering the matter, I have great reason to doubt, whether beauty be at all an idea belonging to proportion. Proportion relates almost wholly to convenience, as every idea of order seems to do ; and it must therefore be considered as a creature of the understanding, rather than a primary cause acting on the senses and imagination. It is not by the force of long attention and enquiry that we find any object to be beautiful ; beauty demands no assistance from our reasoning ; even the will is unconcerned ; the appearance of beauty as effectually causes some degree of love in us, as the application of ice or fire produces the ideas of heat or cold. To gain something like a satisfactory conclusion in this point ; it were well to examine, first, in what things we find this quality of beauty ; next, to see whether

in these, we can find any assignable proportions, in such a manner as ought to convince us, that our idea of beauty results from them. We shall consider this pleasing power, as it appears in vegetables, in the inferior animals, and in man. Turning our eyes to the vegetable creation, we find nothing there so beautiful as flowers; but flowers are of almost every sort of shape, and of every sort of disposition; they are turned and fashioned into an infinite variety of forms; and from these forms, botanists have given them their names, which are almost as various. What proportion do we discover between the stalks and the leaves of flowers, or between the leaves and the pistils? How does the slender stalk of the rose agree with the bulky head under which it bends? but the rose is a beautiful flower; and can we undertake to say that it does not owe a great deal of its beauty even to that disproportion? the rose is a large flower, yet it grows upon a small shrub; the flower of the apple is very small, and it grows upon a large tree; yet the rose and the apple blossom are both beautiful, and the plants that bear them are most engagingly attired notwithstanding this disproportion. What by general consent is allowed to be a more beautiful object than an orange tree, flourishing at once with its leaves,  
its

its blossoms, and its fruit? but it is in vain that we search here for any proportion between the height, the breadth, or any thing else concerning the dimensions of the whole, or concerning the relation of the particular parts to each other. I grant that we may observe in many flowers, something of a regular figure, and of a methodical disposition of the leaves. The rose has such a figure and such a disposition of its petals; but in an oblique view, when this figure is in a good measure lost, and the order of the leaves confounded, it yet retains its beauty; the rose is even more beautiful before it is full blown; in the bud; before this exact figure is formed; and this is not the only instance wherein method and exactness, the soul of proportion, are found rather prejudicial than serviceable to the cause of beauty.

### S E C T. III.

Proportion not the cause of BEAUTY in  
ANIMALS.

**T**HAT proportion has but a small share in the formation of beauty, is full as evident among animals. Here the greatest variety of shapes, and dispositions of parts are well fitted,



to excite this idea. The swan, confessedly a beautiful bird, has a neck longer than the rest of his body, and but a very short tail; is this a beautiful proportion? we must allow that it is. But then what shall we say to the peacock, who has comparatively but a short neck, with a tail longer than the neck and the rest of the body taken together? How many birds are there that vary infinitely from each of these standards, and from every other which you can fix, with proportions different, and often directly opposite to each other! and yet many of these birds are extremely beautiful; when upon considering them we find nothing in any one part that might determine us, *a priori*, to say what the others ought to be, nor indeed to guess any thing about them, but what experience might shew to be full of disappointment and mistake. And with regard to the colours either of birds or flowers, for there is something similar in the colouring of both, whether they are considered in their extension or gradation, there is nothing of proportion to be observed. Some are of but one single colour; others have all the colours of the rainbow; some are of the primary colours, others are of the mixt; in short, an attentive observer may soon conclude, that there is as little of proportion in the colouring as in the shapes

shapes of these objects. Turn next to beasts; examine the head of a beautiful horse; find what proportion that bears to his body, and to his limbs, and what relation these have to each other; and when you have settled these proportions as a standard of beauty, then take a dog or cat, or any other animal, and examine how far the same proportions between their heads and their necks, between those and the body, and so on, are found to hold; I think we may safely say, that they differ in every species, yet that there are individuals found in a great many species so differing, that have a very striking beauty.

#### S E C T. IV.

Proportion not the cause of BEAUTY in the human species.

**T**HERE are some parts of the human body, that are observed to hold certain proportions to each other; but before it can be proved, that the efficient cause of beauty lies in these, it must be shewn, that wherever these are found exact, the person to whom they belong is beautiful. I mean in the effect produced on the view, either of any member distinctly considered, or  
of

of the whole body together. It must be likewise shewn, that these parts stand in such a relation to each other, that the comparison between them may be easily made, and that the affection of the mind may naturally result from it. For my part, I have at several times very carefully examined many of those proportions, and found them hold very nearly, or altogether alike in many subjects, which were not only very different from one another, but where one has been very beautiful, and the other very remote from beauty. With regard to the parts which are found so proportioned, they are often so remote from each other, in situation, nature, and office, that I cannot see how they admit of any comparison, nor consequently how any effect owing to proportion can result from them. The neck, say they, in beautiful bodies should measure with the calf of the leg; it should likewise be twice the circumference of the wrist. And an infinity of observations of this kind to be found in the writings, and conversations of many. These proportions are certainly to be found in handsome bodies. They are as certainly in ugly ones, as any who will take the pains to try, may find. Nay, I do not know but they may be least perfect in some of the most beautiful. How are the partizans of proportional beauty

beauty agreed about the proportions of the human body? some hold it to be seven heads; others make it eight; a vast difference in such a small number of divisions! others take other methods of estimating the proportions, and all with equal success. But are these proportions exactly the same in all handsome men? or are they at all the proportions found in beautiful women? nobody will say that they are; yet both sexes are capable of beauty, but the female of the greatest, which I believe will hardly be attributed to the superior exactness of proportion in the fair sex. In fine, take the head as the measure of proportion in any species of animals, as in men; and having found what relation that bears to the other parts, examine the beautiful animals of the winged and four-footed kinds by this rule; and it will shew evidently what a fallacious standard we have chosen; the same will happen if you take any other part of any other animal whatsoever, as your rule to measure by. The proportions of animals are relative to the *usual form* in which we see them; if this is changed, we are shocked in the same manner that we are when any thing happens contrary to expectation. It must not be denied, that if the parts of any animal are so formed that they do not well support each

each

each other, the effect is disagreeable; but to have them simply otherwise, that is, not burthenfome to one another, does not by any means produce beauty.

## S E C T. V.

Proportion further considered.

NOW if it be allowed, that almost every sort of form, and every manner of arrangement is consistent with beauty, I imagine it amounts to a concession that no particular proportions are necessary to it. But if I am not mistaken, a great deal of the opinions concerning proportion have arisen from this; that *deformity* has been considered as the opposite to *beauty*; and that the removal of the former of these qualities gave birth to the latter. This I believe is a mistake. For *deformity* is opposed, not to beauty, but to the *complete, common form*. If one of the legs of a man be found shorter than the other, the man is deformed; because there is something wanting to complete the whole idea we form of a man; and this has the same effect in natural faults, as maiming and mutilation produce from accidents. So if the back be humped, the man is deformed; because his

back has an unusual figure, and what carries with it the idea of some disease or misfortune; so if a man's neck be considerably longer or shorter than usual, we say he is deformed in that part, because men are not commonly made in that manner. But surely every hour's experience may convince us, that a man may have his legs of an equal length, and resembling each other in all respects, and his neck of a just size, and his back quite strait, without having at the same time the least perceivable beauty. Deformity arises from the want of the common proportions; but the necessary result of their existence in any object is not beauty. I say the common proportions in each species of animals, because these proportions vary in all of them; there can be no absolute proportion assigned which constitutes an universal beauty; and a proportion which cannot be assigned, is, in other words, no proportion at all. But if proportion in natural things be relative to custom and use, the nature of use and custom will shew, that beauty, which is a positive and powerful quality, cannot result from it. We are so wonderfully formed, that at the same time that we are creatures vehemently desirous of novelty, we are as strongly attached to habit and custom. But it is the nature of things which hold us  
by

by custom to affect us very little whilst we are in possession of them, but strongly when they are absent. I remember to have frequented a certain place, every day for a long time together; and I may truly say, that so far from finding pleasure in it, that I was affected with a sort of weariness and disgust; I came, I went, I returned without pleasure; yet if by any means I passed by the usual time of my going thither, I was remarkably uneasy, and was not quiet till I had got into my old track. They who use snuff take it almost without being sensible that they take it, and the acute sense of smell is deadened so as to feel hardly any thing from so sharp a stimulus; yet deprive the snuff-taker of his box, and he is the most uneasy mortal in the world. So the want of the usual proportion in men and other animals is sure to disgust, though their presence is by no means any cause of real pleasure. It is true, that the proportions laid down as causes of beauty in the human body are frequently found in beautiful ones, because they are generally found in all mankind; but if it can be shewn too that they are found without beauty, and that beauty frequently exists without them, and that this beauty, where it exists, always can be assigned to other less equivocal causes, it will naturally lead us to conclude, that pro-

portion and beauty are not ideas of the same nature. The true opposite to beauty is not disproportion or deformity, but *ugliness*; and as it proceeds from causes opposite to those of positive beauty, we cannot consider it until we come to treat of that. Between beauty and ugliness there is a sort of mediocrity, in which the assigned proportions are most commonly found, but this has no effect upon the passions.

## S E C T. VI.

FITNESS not the cause of B E A U T Y.

**I**T is said that the idea of utility, or of a part's being well adapted to answer its end, is the cause of beauty, or indeed beauty itself. This notion is closely allied to the former one of proportion, but surely never arose from experience. For at that rate, the wedge-like snout of a swine, with its tough cartilage at the end, its little sunk eyes, and the whole make so well adapted to its offices of digging, and rooting, would be extremely beautiful. The great bag hanging to the bill of a pelican, a thing highly useful to this animal, would be likewise as beautiful in our eyes. The hedgehog, so well secured against all assaults  
by



by his prickly hide, or the porcupine with his missile quills, would be then considered as creatures of no small beauty. There are few animals, whose parts are better contrived than those of a monkey, he has the hands of a man, joined to the springy limbs of a beast; and is admirably calculated for running, leaping, grappling, and climbing: and yet there are few animals seem to us to have less beauty. To leave these foreign examples; if beauty in our own species, was annexed to use, men would be much more lovely than women; and strength and agility would be considered as the only beauties. But to call strength by the name of beauty, to have but one denomination for the qualities of a Venus and Hercules, so totally different in almost all respects, is surely a strange confusion of ideas, or abuse of words. The cause of this confusion, I imagine, proceeds from our frequently perceiving the parts of the human and other animal bodies to be at once very beautiful, and very well adapted to their purposes; and we are deceived by a sophism, which makes us take that for a cause which is only a concomitant; this is the sophism of the fly; who imagined he raised a great dust, because he stood upon the chariot that really raised it. The stomach, the lungs, the liver, as well as

other parts, are incomparably well adapted to their purposes ; yet they are far from having any beauty. Again, many things are very beautiful, in which it is impossible to discern any idea of use. And I appeal to the first and most natural feelings of mankind, whether on beholding a beautiful eye, or a well-fashioned mouth, or a well-turned leg, any ideas of their being well fitted for seeing, eating, or running, ever present themselves. What idea of use is it that flowers excite, the most beautiful part of the vegetable world ? It is true, that the infinitely wise and good Creator has, of his bounty, frequently joined beauty to those things which he has made useful to us ; but this does not prove that an idea of use and beauty are the same thing, or that they are any way dependent on each other.

## S E C T. VII.

### The real effects of FITNESS.

**W**HEN I excluded proportion and fitness from any share in beauty, I did not by any means intend to say that they were of no value, or that they ought to be disregarded in works of art. Works of art are the proper sphere of their power ; and here it  
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is that they have their full effect. Whenever the wisdom of our Creator intended that we should be affected with any thing, he did not confide the execution of his design to the languid and precarious operation of our reason; but he endued it with powers and properties that prevent the understanding, and even the will, which seizing upon the senses and imagination, captivate the soul before the understanding is ready either to join with them or to oppose them. It is by a long deduction and much study that we discover the adorable wisdom of God in his works: when we discover it, the effect is very different, not only in the manner of acquiring it, but in its own nature, from that which strikes us without any preparation from the sublime or the beautiful. How different is the satisfaction of an anatomist, who discovers the use of the muscles and of the skin, the excellent contrivance of the one for the various movements of the body, and the wonderful texture of the other, at once a general, covering and at once a general outlet, as well as inlet; how different is this from the affection which possesses an ordinary man at the sight of a delicate smooth skin, and all the other parts of beauty which require no investigation to be perceived? In the former case, whilst we

look up to the Maker with admiration and praise, the object which causes it may be odious and distasteful; the latter very often so touches us by its power on the imagination, that we examine but little into the artifice of its contrivance, and we have need of a strong effort of our reason to disentangle our minds from the allurements of the object to a consideration of the wisdom of that hand which invented so powerful a machine. The effect of proportion and fitness, at least so far as they proceed from a mere consideration of the work itself, produce approbation, the acquiescence of the understanding, but not love, nor any passion of that species. When we examine the structure of a watch, when we come to know thoroughly the use of every part of it, satisfied as we are with the fitness of the whole, we are far enough from perceiving any thing like beauty in the watch-work itself; but let us look on the case, the labour of some curious artist in engraving, with little or no idea of use, we shall have a much livelier idea of beauty than we ever could have had from the watch itself, though the master-piece of Graham. In beauty, as I said, the effect is previous to any knowledge of the use; but to judge of proportion, we must know the end for which any work is designed.

designed. According to the end the proportion varies. Thus there is one proportion of a tower, another of an house ; one proportion of a gallery, another of an hall, another of a chamber. To judge of the proportions of these, you must be first acquainted with the purposes for which they were designed. Good sense and experience acting together, find out what is fit to be done in every work of art. We are rational creatures, and in all our works we ought to regard their end and purpose ; the gratification of any passion, how innocent soever, ought only to be of secondary consideration. Herein is placed the real power of fitness and proportion ; they operate on the understanding considering them, which *approves* the work and acquiesces in it. The passions, and the imagination which principally raises them, have here very little to do. When a room appears in its original nakedness, bare walls and a plain cieling ; let its proportion be ever so excellent, it pleases very little ; a cold approbation is the utmost we can reach ; a much worse proportioned room, with elegant mouldings and fine festoons, glasses, and other merely ornamental furniture, will make the imagination revolt against the reason ; it will please much more than the naked proportion of the first room which  
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the understanding has so much approved, as admirably fitted for its purposes. What I have here said and before concerning proportion, is by no means to persuade people absurdly to neglect the idea of use in the works of art. It is only to shew that these excellent things, beauty and proportion, are not the same; not that they should either of them be disregarded.

## S E C T. VIII.

### The RECAPITULATION.

**O**N the whole; if such parts in human bodies as are found proportioned, were likewise constantly found beautiful, as they certainly are not; or if they were so situated, as that a pleasure might flow from the comparison, which they seldom are; or if any assignable proportions were found, either in plants or animals, which were always attended with beauty, which never was the case; or if, where parts were well adapted to their purposes, they were constantly beautiful, and when no use appeared, there was no beauty, which is contrary to all experience; we might conclude, that beauty consisted in proportion or utility. But since, in all respects, the case

is quite otherwise; we may be satisfied, that beauty does not depend on these, let it owe its origin to what else it will.

## S E C T. IX.

## Perfection not the cause of BEAUTY,

**T**HERE is another notion current, pretty closely allied to the former; that *Perfection* is the constituent cause of beauty. This opinion has been made to extend much further than to sensible objects. But in these, so far is perfection, considered as such, from being the cause of beauty; that this quality, where it is highest in the female sex, almost always carries with it an idea of weakness and imperfection. Women are very sensible of this; for which reason, they learn to lisp, to totter in their walk, to counterfeit weakness, and even sickness. In all this, they are guided by nature. Beauty in distress is much the most affecting beauty. Blushing has little less power; and modesty in general, which is a tacit allowance of imperfection, is itself considered as an amiable quality, and certainly heightens every other that is so. I know, that it is in every body's mouth, that we ought to love perfection. This is to me a sufficient proof,

proof, that it is not the proper object of love. Who ever said, we *ought* to love a fine woman, or even any of these beautiful animals, which please us? Here to be affected, there is no need of the concurrence of our will.

### S E C T. X.

How far the idea of BEAUTY may be applied to the qualities of the MIND.

**N**OR is this remark in general less applicable to the qualities of the mind. Those virtues which cause admiration, and are of the sublimer kind, produce terror rather than love. Such as fortitude, justice, wisdom, and the like. Never was any man amiable by force of these qualities. Those which engage our hearts, which impress us with a sense of loveliness, are the softer virtues; easiness of temper, compassion, kindness and liberality; though certainly those latter are of less immediate and momentous concern to society, and of less dignity. But it is for that reason that they are so amiable. The great virtues turn principally on dangers, punishments, and troubles, and are exercised rather in preventing the worst mischiefs, than in dispensing favours; and are therefore not lovely, though



though highly venerable. The subordinate turn on reliefs, gratifications, and indulgences; and are therefore more lovely, though inferior in dignity. Those persons who creep into the hearts of most people, who are chosen as the companions of their softer hours, and their reliefs from care and anxiety, are never persons of shining qualities, nor strong virtues. It is rather the soft green of the soul on which we rest our eyes, that are fatigued with beholding more glaring objects. It is worth observing, how we feel ourselves affected with reading the characters of Cæsar, and Cato, as they are so finely drawn and contrasted in Salust. In one, the *ignoscendo, largiundo*; in the other, *nil largiundo*. In one, the *miseris perfugium*; in the other, *malis perniciem*. In the latter we have much to admire, much to reverence, and perhaps something to fear; we respect him, but we respect him at a distance. The former makes us familiar with him; we love him, and he leads us whither he pleases. To draw things closer to our first and most natural feelings; I will add to this a remark made upon reading this section by an ingenious friend. The authority of a father, so useful to our well-being, and so justly venerable upon all accounts, hinders us from having that entire love for him that

we

we have for our mothers, where the parental authority is almost melted down into the mother's fondness and indulgence. But we generally have a great love for our grandfathers, in whom this authority is removed a degree from us, and where the weakness of age mellows it into something of a feminine partiality.

## S E C T. XI.

How far the idea of B E A U T Y may be applied to V I R T U E.

**F**ROM what has been said in the foregoing section, we may easily see, how far the application of beauty to virtue may be made with propriety. The general application of this metaphorical quality to virtue, has a strong tendency to confound our ideas of things; and it has given rise to an infinite deal of whimsical theory; as the affixing the name of beauty to proportion, congruity and perfection, as well as to qualities of things yet more remote from our natural ideas of it, and from one another, has tended to confound our ideas of beauty, and left us no standard or rule to judge by, that was not even more uncertain and fallacious than our own fancies.

S E C T.

## S E C T. XII.

## The real cause of BEAUTY.

**H**AVING endeavoured to shew what beauty is not, it remains that we should examine, at least with equal attention, in what it really consists; for beauty is a thing much too affecting not to depend upon some positive qualities. Now certainly, since it is no creature of our reason, since it strikes us without any reference to use, and even where no use at all can be discerned, since the order and method of nature is generally very different from our measures and proportions, we must conclude that beauty is, for the greater part, some merely sensible quality, acting mechanically upon the human mind by the intervention of the senses. And we ought therefore to consider in what manner those sensible qualities are disposed, in such things as by experience we find beautiful, or which excite in us the passion of love, or some correspondent affection.

## S E C T. XIII.

Beautiful objects small.

**T**HE most obvious point that presents itself to us in examining any object, is its extent or quantity. And what degree of extent prevails in bodies, that are held beautiful, may be gathered from the usual manner of expression concerning it. I am told that in most languages, the objects of love are spoken of under diminutive epithets. It is so in all the languages of which I have any knowledge. in Greek the *ιων*, and other diminutive terms, are almost always the terms of affection and tenderness. These diminutives were commonly added by the same people to the names of persons with whom they conversed on terms of friendship and familiarity. Though the Romans were a people of less quick and delicate feelings, yet they naturally slid into the lessening termination upon the same occasions. Anciently in the English language the diminishing *ling* was added to the names of persons or things that were the objects of love. Some we retain still, as darling, (or little dear) and a few others. But to this day in ordinary conversation, it is usual to add the endearing  
 . name

name of *little* to every thing we love; the French and Italians make use of these affectionate diminutives even more than we. In the animal creation, out of our own species, it is the small we are inclined to be fond of. Little birds, and some of the smaller kinds of beasts. A great beautiful thing, is a manner of expression scarcely ever used; but that of a great ugly thing, is very common. There is a wide difference between admiration and love. The sublime, which is the cause of the former, always dwells on great objects, and terrible; the latter on small ones, and pleasing; we submit to what we admire; but we love what submits to us; in one case we are forced, in the other we are flattered into compliance. In short, the ideas of the sublime and the beautiful stand on foundations so different, that it is hard, I had almost said impossible, to think of reconciling them in the same subject, without considerably lessening the effect of the one or the other upon the passions. So that attending to their quantity, beautiful objects are comparatively small.

## S E C T. XIV.

## S M O O T H N E S S.

**T**HE next property constantly observable in such objects is \* *Smoothness*. A quality so essential to beauty, that I do not now recollect any thing beautiful that is not smooth. In trees and flowers, smooth leaves are beautiful; smooth slopes of earth in gardens; smooth streams in the landscape; smooth coats of birds and beasts in animal beauties; in fine women, smooth skins; and in several sorts of ornamental furniture, smooth and polished surfaces. A very considerable part of the effect of beauty is owing to this quality; indeed the most considerable. For take any beautiful object, and give it a broken and rugged surface, and however well formed it may be in other respects, it pleases no longer. Whereas let it want ever so many of the other constituents, if it wants not this, it becomes more pleasing than almost all the others without it. This seems to me so evident, that I am a good deal surpris'd, that none who have handled the sub-

\* Part 4. sect. 21.

ject have made any mention of the quality of smoothness in the enumeration of those that go to the forming of beauty. For indeed any ruggedness, any sudden projection, any sharp angle is in the highest degree contrary to that idea.

## S E C T. XV.

## Gradual V A R I A T I O N.

**B**UT as perfectly beautiful bodies are not composed of angular parts, so their parts never continue long in the same right line. † They vary their direction every moment, and they change under the eye by a deviation continually carrying on, but for whose beginning or end you will find it difficult to ascertain a point. The view of a beautiful bird will illustrate this observation. Here we see the head increasing insensibly to the middle, from whence it lessens gradually until it mixes with the neck; the neck loses itself in a larger swell, which continues to the middle of the body, when the whole decreases again to the tail; the tail takes a new direction;

† Part 5. sect. 23.

but it soon varies its new course; it blends again with the other parts; and the line is perpetually and insensibly changing, above, below, upon every side. In this description I have before me the idea of a dove; it agrees very well with most of the conditions of beauty. It is smooth and downy; its parts are (to use that expression) melted into one another; you are presented with no sudden protuberance through the whole, and yet the whole is continually changing. Observe that part of a beautiful woman where she is perhaps the most beautiful, about the neck and breasts; the smoothness; the softness; the easy and insensible swell; the variety of the surface, which is never for the smallest space the same; the deceitful maze, through which the unsteady eye slides giddily, without knowing where to fix, or whither it is carried. Is not this a demonstration of that change of surface continual and yet hardly perceptible at any point which forms one of the great constituents of beauty?



## S E C T. XVI.

## D E L I C A C Y.

**A**N air of robustness and strength is very prejudicial to beauty. An appearance of *delicacy*, and even of fragility, is almost essential to it. Whoever examines the vegetable or animal creation, will find this observation to be founded in nature. It is not the oak, the ash, or the elm, or any of the robust trees of the forest which we consider as beautiful; they are awful and majestic; they inspire a sort of reverence. It is the delicate myrtle, it is the orange, it is the almond, it is the jessamine, it is the vine, which we look on as vegetable beauties. It is the flowery species, so remarkable for its weakness and momentary duration, that gives us the liveliest idea of beauty, and elegance. Among animals; the greyhound is more beautiful than the mastiff; and the delicacy of a gennet, a barb, or an Arabian horse, is much more amiable, than the strength and stability of some horses of war or carriage. I need here say little of the fair sex, where I believe the point will be easily allowed me. The beauty of women is considerably owing to their weakness, or delicacy,

and is even enhanced by their timidity, a quality of mind analogous to it. I would not here be understood to say, that weakness betraying very bad health has any share in beauty; but the ill effect of this is not because it is weakness, but because the ill state of health which produces such weakness alters the other conditions of beauty; the parts in such a case collapse; the bright colour, the *lumen purpureum juventæ* is gone; and the fine variation is lost in wrinkles, sudden breaks, and right lines.

## S E C T XVII.

### Beauty in C O L O U R.

**A**S to the colours usually found in beautiful bodies; it may be somewhat difficult to ascertain them, because in the several parts of nature, there is an infinite variety. However, even in this variety, we may mark out something on which to settle. First, the colours of beautiful bodies must not be dusky or muddy, but clean and fair. Secondly, they must not be of the strongest kind. Those which seem most appropriated to beauty, are the milder of every sort; light greens; soft blues; weak whites; pink reds; and violets.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, if the colours be strong and vivid, they are always diversified, and the object is never of one strong colour; there are almost always such a number of them (as in variegated flowers) that the strength and glare of each is considerably abated. In a fine complexion, there is not only some variety in the colouring, but the colours, neither the red nor the white are strong and glaring. Besides, they are mixed in such a manner, and with such gradations, that it is impossible to fix the bounds. On the same principle it is, that the dubious colour in the necks and tails of peacocks, and about the heads of drakes, is so very agreeable. In reality, the beauty both of shape and colouring are as nearly related, as we can well suppose it possible for things of such different natures to be.

## S E C T. XVIII.

## R E C A P I T U L A T I O N.

**O**N the whole, the qualities of beauty, as they are merely sensible qualities, are the following. First, to be comparatively small. Secondly, to be smooth. Thirdly, to have a variety in the direction of the parts; but fourthly, to have those parts not angular,

but melted as it were into each other. Fifthly, to be of a delicate frame, without any remarkable appearance of strength. Sixthly, to have its colours clear and bright; but not very strong and glaring. Seventhly, or if it should have any glaring colour, to have it diversified with others. These are, I believe, the properties on which beauty depends; properties that operate by nature, and are less liable to be altered by caprice, or confounded by a diversity of tastes, than any others.

## S E C T. XIX.

## The P H Y S I O G N O M Y.

**T**HE *Physiognomy* has a considerable share in beauty, especially in that of our own species. The manners give a certain determination to the countenance, which being observed to correspond pretty regularly with them, is capable of joining the effect of certain agreeable qualities of the mind to those of the body. So that to form a finished human beauty, and to give it its full influence, the face must be expressive of such gentle and amiable qualities, as correspond with the softness, smoothness, and delicacy of the outward form.

S E C T.

## S E C T. XX.

## The E Y E.

I HAVE hitherto purposely omitted to speak of the *Eye*, which has so great a share in the beauty of the animal creation, as it did not fall so easily under the foregoing heads, though in fact it is reducible to the same principles. I think then, that the beauty of the eye consists, first, in its *clearness*; what *coloured* eye shall please most, depends a good deal on particular fancies; but none are pleased with an eye, whose water (to use that term) is dull and muddy. \* We are pleased with the eye in this view, on the principle upon which we like diamonds, clear water, glass, and such like transparent substances. Secondly, the motion of the eye contributes to its beauty, by continually shifting its direction; but a slow and languid motion is more beautiful than a brisk one; the latter is enlivening; the former lovely. Thirdly, with regard to its union with the neighbouring parts, it is to hold the same rule that is given of other beautiful ones; it is not to make a strong deviation from the

\* Part 4. sect. 25.

line of the neighbouring parts; nor to verge into any exact geometrical figure. Besides all this, the eye affects, as it is expressive of some qualities of the mind, and its principal power generally arises from this; so that what we have just said of the physiognomy is applicable here.

## S E C T. XXI.

## U G L I N E S S.

**I**T may perhaps appear like a sort of repetition of what we have before said, to insist here upon the nature of *Ugliness*. As I imagine it to be in all respects the opposite to those qualities which we have laid down for the constituents of beauty. But though ugliness be the opposite to beauty, it is not the opposite to proportion and fitness. For it is possible that a thing may be very ugly with any proportions, and with a perfect fitness to any uses. Ugliness I imagine likewise to be consistent enough with an idea of the sublime. But I would by no means insinuate that ugliness of itself is a sublime idea, unless united with such qualities as excite a strong terror.

## S E C T. XXII.

## G R A C E.

**G***racefulness* is an idea not very different from beauty; it consists in much the same things. Gracefulness is an idea belonging to *posture* and *motion*. In both these, to be graceful, it is requisite that there be no appearance of difficulty; there is required a small inflexion of the body; and a composure of the parts, in such a manner, as not to incumber each other, nor to appear divided by sharp and sudden angles. In this ease, this roundness, and delicacy of attitude and motion, it is that all the magic of grace consists, and what is called its *je ne scai quoi*, as will be more obvious to any body who considers attentively the Venus de Medicis, the Antinous, or any statue generally allowed to be graceful in an high degree.

## S E C T. XXIII.

## ELEGANCE and SPECIOUSNESS.

**W**HEN any body is composed of parts smooth and polished, without pressing upon each other, without shewing any ruggedness

ness or confusion, and at the same time affecting some *regular shape*, I call it *elegant*. It is closely allied to the beautiful, differing from it only in this *regularity*; which however, as it makes a very material difference, in the affection produced, may very well constitute another species. Under this head I rank those delicate and regular works of art, that imitate no determinate object in nature, as elegant buildings, and pieces of furniture. When any object partakes of the abovementioned qualities, or of those of beautiful bodies, and is withal of great dimensions; it is full as remote from the idea of mere beauty. I call it *fine* or *specious*.

#### S E C T. XXIV.

##### The beautiful in FEELING.

**T**HE foregoing description of beauty, so far as is taken in by the eye, may be greatly illustrated by describing the nature of objects, which produce a similar effect through the touch. This I call the beautiful in *Feeling*. It corresponds wonderfully with what causes the same species of pleasure to the sight. There is a chain in all our sensations, they are all but different sorts of feeling, calculated to be affected by various sorts of objects, but  
all



all to be affected after the same manner. All bodies that are pleasant to the touch, are so by the slightness of the resistance they make. Resistance is either to motion along the surface, or to the pressure of the parts on one another; if the former be slight, we call the body, smooth; if the latter, soft. The chief pleasure we receive by feeling, is in the one or the other of these qualities; and if there be a combination of both, our pleasure is greatly increased. This is so plain, that it is rather more fit to illustrate other things, than to be illustrated itself by any example. The next source of pleasure in this sense, as in every other, is the continually presenting somewhat new; and we find that bodies which continually vary their surface, are much the most pleasant, or beautiful, to the feeling, as any one that pleases may experience. The third property in such objects is, that though the surface continually varies its direction, it never varies it suddenly. The application of any thing sudden, even though the impression itself have little or nothing of violence, is disagreeable. The quick application of a finger a little warmer or colder than usual, without notice, makes us start; a slight tap on the shoulder, not expected, has the same effect. Hence it is that angular bodies, bodies that  
suddenly

suddenly vary the direction of the outline, afford so little pleasure to the feeling. Every such change is a sort of climbing or falling in miniature ; so that squares, triangles, and other angular figures, are neither beautiful to the sight nor feeling. Whoever compares his state of mind, on feeling soft, smooth, varied, unangular bodies, with that in which he finds himself, on the view of a beautiful object, will perceive a very striking analogy in the effects of both ; and which may go a good way towards discovering their common cause. Feeling and sight in this respect, differ in but a few points. The touch takes in the pleasure of softness, which is not primarily an object of sight ; the sight on the other hand comprehends colour, which can hardly be made perceptible to the touch ; the touch again has the advantage in a new idea of pleasure resulting from a moderate degree of warmth ; but the eye triumphs in the infinite extent and multiplicity of its objects. But there is such a similitude in the pleasures of these senses, that I am apt to fancy, if it were possible that one might discern colour by feeling, (as it is said some blind men have done) that the same colours, and the same disposition of colouring, which are found beautiful to the sight,

sight, would be found likewise most grateful to the touch. But setting aside conjectures, let us pass to the other sense; of hearing.

## S E C T. XXV.

## The beautiful in S O U N D S.

**I**N this sense we find an equal aptitude to be affected in a soft and delicate manner; and how far sweet or beautiful sounds agree with our descriptions of beauty in other senses, the experience of every one must decide. Milton has described this species of music in one of his juvenile poems \*. I need not say that Milton was perfectly well versed in that art; and had as fine an ear, with as happy a manner of expressing the affections of one sense by metaphors taken from another, as any man that ever was. The description is as follows.

*—And ever against eating cares,  
Lap me in soft Lydian airs;  
In notes with many a winding bout  
Of linked sweetness long drawn out;  
With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,  
The melting voice through mazes running;*

\* Il allegro.

*Untwisting all the chains that tye  
The hidden soul of harmony.*

Let us parallel this with the softness, the winding surface, the unbroken continuance, the easy gradation of the beautiful in other things; and all the diversities of the several senses, with all their several affections, will rather help to throw lights from one another to finish one clear, consistent idea of the whole, than to obscure it by their intricacy and variety.

## S E C T. XXVI.

Continued.

**T**O the abovementioned description I shall add one or two remarks. The first is; that the beautiful in music will not bear that loudness and strength of sounds, that may be used to raise other passions; nor notes, which are shrill, or harsh, or deep; it agrees best with such as are clear, even, smooth, and weak. The second is; that great variety, and quick transitions from one measure or tone to another, are contrary to the genius of the beautiful in music. Such † transitions often

† I ne'er am merry, when I hear sweet music.

SHAKESPEAR.

excite

excite mirth, or other sudden and tumultuous passions; but not that sinking, that melting, that languor, which is the characteristical effect of the beautiful, as it regards every sense. The passion excited by beauty is in fact nearer to a species of melancholy, than to jollity and mirth. I do not here mean to confine music to any one species of notes, or tones, neither is it an art in which I can say I have any great skill. My sole design in this remark is, to settle a consistent idea of beauty. The infinite variety of the affections of the soul will suggest to a good head, and skilful ear, a variety of such sounds, as are fitted to raise them. It can be no prejudice to this, to clear and distinguish some few particulars, that belong to the same class, and are consistent with each other, from the immense croud of different, and sometimes contradictory ideas, that rank vulgarly under the standard of beauty. And of these it is my intention to mark such only of the leading points as shew the conformity of the sense of hearing, with all the other senses in the article of their pleasures.

## S E C T. XXVII.

## TASTE and SMELL.

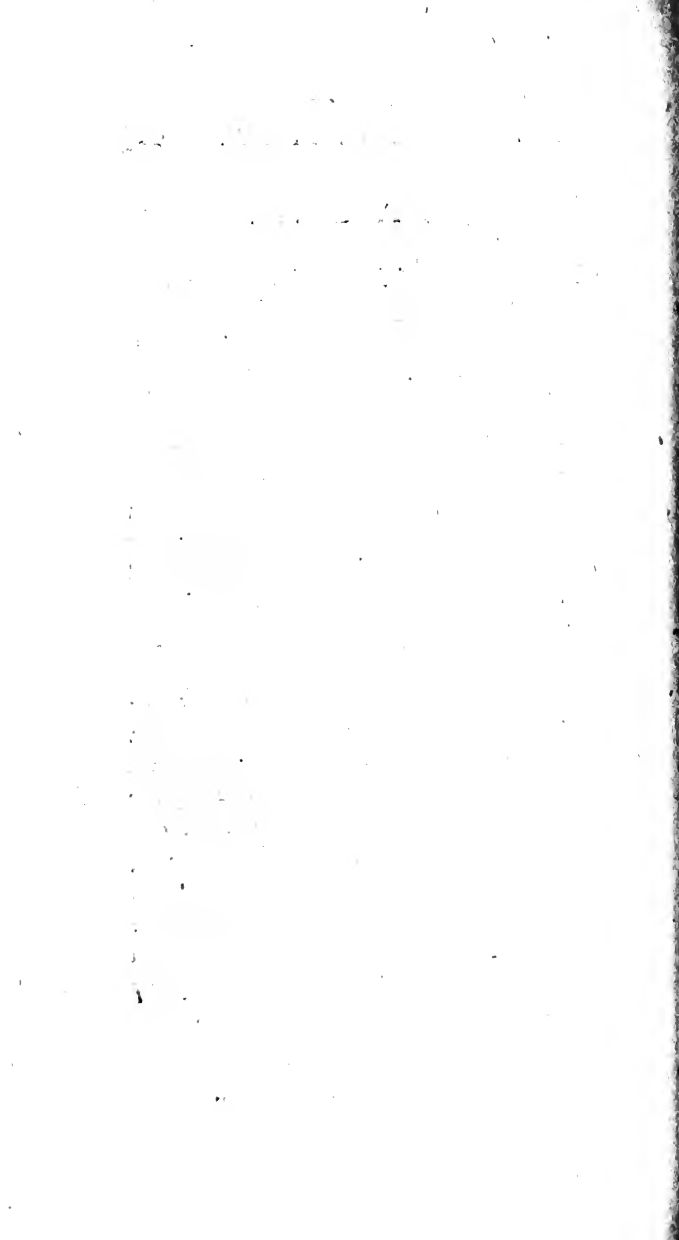
**T**HIS general agreement of the senses is yet more evident on minutely considering those of taste and smell. We metaphorically apply the idea of sweetness to sights, and sounds; but as the qualities of bodies by which they are fitted to excite either pleasure or pain in these senses, are not so obvious as they are in the others, we shall refer an explanation of their analogy, which is a very close one, to that part, wherein we come to consider the common efficient cause of beauty as it regards all the senses. I do not think any thing better fitted to establish a clear and settled idea of visual beauty, than this way of examining the similar pleasures of other senses; for one part is sometimes clear in one of the senses, that is more obscure in another; and where there is a clear concurrence of all, we may with more certainty speak of any one of them. By this means, they bear witness to each other; nature is, as it were, scrutinized; and we report nothing of her, but what we receive from her own information.

## S E C T. XXVIII.

The Sublime and Beautiful compared.

**O**N closing this general view of beauty, it naturally occurs, that we should compare it with the sublime; and in this comparison there appears a remarkable contrast. For sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small; beauty should be smooth, and polished; the great, rugged and negligent; beauty should shun the right line, yet deviate from it insensibly; the great in many cases loves the right line, and when it deviates, it often makes a strong deviation; beauty should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and gloomy; beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid, and even massive. They are indeed ideas of a very different nature, one being founded on pain, the other on pleasure; and however they may vary afterwards from the direct nature of their causes, yet these causes keep up an eternal distinction between them, a distinction never to be forgotten by any whose business it is to affect the passions.

The end of the Third Part.







A

# Philosophical Enquiry

INTO THE

ORIGIN of our IDEAS

OF THE

SUBLIME and BEAUTIFUL.

PART IV.

SECT. I.

Of the efficient cause of the SUBLIME  
and BEAUTIFUL.

**W**HEN I say, I intend to enquire into the efficient cause of sublimity and beauty, I would not be understood to say, that I can come to the ultimate cause. I do not pretend that I shall ever be able to explain, why certain affections of the body produce such a distinct emotion of mind, and no other; or why the body is at all affected by the mind, or the mind by the body. A little thought will shew this to be impossible.

But I conceive, if we can discover what affections of the mind produce certain emotions of the body; and what distinct feelings and qualities of body shall produce certain determinate passions in the mind, and no others, I fancy a great deal will be done; something not unuseful towards a distinct knowledge of our passions, so far at least as we have them at present under our consideration. This is all, I believe, we can do. If we could advance a step farther, difficulties would still remain, as we should be still equally distant from the first cause. When Newton first discovered the property of attraction, and settled its laws, he found it served very well to explain several of the most remarkable phenomena in nature; but yet with reference to the general system of things, he could consider attraction but as an effect, whose cause at that time he did not attempt to trace. But when he afterwards began to account for it by a subtle elastic æther, this great man (if in so great a man it be not impious to discover any thing like a blemish) seemed to have quitted his usual cautious manner of philosophising; since, perhaps, allowing all that has been advanced on this subject to be sufficiently proved, I think it leaves us with as many difficulties as it found us. That  
great

great chain of causes, which linking one to another even to the throne of God himself, can never be unravelled by any industry of ours. When we go but one step beyond the immediately sensible qualities of things, we go out of our depth. All we do after, is but a faint struggle, that shews we are in an element, that does not belong to us. So that when I speak of cause, and efficient cause, I only mean, certain affections of the mind, that cause certain changes in the body; or certain powers and properties in bodies, that work a change in the mind. As if I were to explain the motion of a body falling to the ground, I would say it was caused by gravity, and I would endeavour to shew after what manner this power operated, without attempting to shew why it operated in this manner; or if I were to explain the effects of bodies striking one another by the common laws of percussion, I should not endeavour to explain how motion itself is communicated.

## S E C T. II.

## A S S O C I A T I O N.

**I**T is no small bar in the way of our enquiries into the causes of the passions, that the occasion of many of them are given, and that their governing motions are impressed at a time when we have not capacity to reflect on them; at a time of which all sorts of memory is worn out of our minds. For besides such things as affect us in various manners according to their natural powers, there are associations made at that early season, which we find it very hard afterwards to distinguish from natural effects. Not to mention the unaccountable antipathies which we find in many persons, we all find it impossible to remember when a steep became more terrible than a plain; or fire or water more dreadful than a clod of earth; though all these are very probably either conclusions from experience, or arising from the premonitions of others; and some of them impressed, in all likelihood, pretty late. But as it must be allowed that many things affect us after a certain manner, not by any natural powers they have for that purpose, but by association; so it would be absurd on the

the

the other hand, to say that nothing affects us otherwise ; since some things must have been originally and naturally agreeable or disagreeable, from which the others derive their associated powers ; and it would be, I fancy, to little purpose to look for the causes of our passions in association, until we fail of them in the natural properties of things.

## S E C T. III.

## Cause of PAIN and FEAR.

I Have before observed, † that whatever is qualified to cause terror, is a foundation capable of the sublime ; to which I add, that not only these, but many things from which we cannot probably apprehend any danger have a similar effect, because they operate in a similar manner. I observed too, that \* whatever produces pleasure, positive and original pleasure, is fit to have beauty engrafted on it. Therefore, to clear up the nature of these qualities, it may be necessary to explain the nature of pain and pleasure on which they depend. A man who suffers under violent bodily pain ; (I suppose the most violent, be-

† Part 1. sect. 8. \* Part 1. sect. 10.

cause the effect may be the more obvious.) I say a man in pain has his teeth set, his eyebrows are violently contracted, his forehead is wrinkled, his eyes are dragged inwards, and rolled with great vehemence, his hair stands an end, the voice is forced out in short shrieks and groans, and the whole fabric totters. Fear or terror, which is an apprehension of pain or death, exhibits exactly the same effects, approaching in violence to those just mentioned in proportion to the nearness of the cause, and the weakness of the subject. This is not only so in the human species, but I have more than once observed in dogs, under an apprehension of punishment, that they have writhed their bodies, and yelped, and howled, as if they had actually felt the blows. From hence I conclude that pain, and fear, act upon the the same parts of the body, and in the same manner, though somewhat differing in degree. That pain and fear consist in an unnatural tension of the nerves; that this is sometimes accompanied with an unnatural strength, which sometimes suddenly changes into an extraordinary weakness; that these effects often come on alternately, and sometimes mixed with each other. This is the nature of all convulsive agitations, especially in weaker subjects,

jects, which are the most liable to the severest impressions of pain and fear. The only difference between pain and terror, is, that things which cause pain operate on the mind, by the intervention of the body; whereas things that cause terror generally affect the bodily organs by the operation of the mind suggesting the danger; but both agreeing, either primarily, or secondarily, in producing a tension, contraction, or violent emotion of the nerves †. They agree likewise in every thing else; for it appears very clearly to me, from this, as well as from many other examples, that when the body is disposed, by any means whatsoever, to such emotions, as it would acquire by the means of a certain passion; it will of itself excite something very like that passion in the mind.

† I do not here enter into the question debated among physiologists, whether pain be the effect of a contraction, or a tension of the nerves. Either will serve my purpose; for by tension, I mean no more than a violent pulling of the fibres, which compose any muscle or membrane, in whatever way this is done.

## S E C T. IV.

Continued.

**T**O this purpose Mr. Spon, in the Recherches d'Antiquite, gives us a curious story of the celebrated physiognomist Campanella; this man, it seems, had not only made very accurate observations on human faces, but was very expert in mimicking such, as were any way remarkable. When he had a mind to penetrate into the inclinations of those he had to deal with, he composed his face, his gesture, and his whole body, as nearly as he could into the exact similitude of the person he intended to examine; and then carefully observed what turn of mind he seemed to acquire by this change. So that, says my author, he was able to enter into the dispositions and thoughts of people, as effectually as if he had been changed into the very men. I have often observed, that on mimicking the looks and gestures, of angry, or placid, or frightened, or daring men, I have involuntarily found my mind turned to that passion whose appearance I endeavoured to imitate; nay, I am convinced it is hard to avoid it; though one strove to separate the  
passion



passion from its correspondent gestures. Our minds and bodies are so closely and intimately connected, that one is incapable of pain or pleasure without the other. Campanella, of whom we have been speaking, could so abstract his attention from any sufferings of his body, that he was able to endure the rack itself without much pain; and in lesser pains, every body must have observed, that when we can employ our attention on any thing else, the pain has been for a time suspended; on the other hand, if by any means the body is indisposed to perform such gestures, or to be stimulated into such emotions as any passion usually produces in it; that passion itself never can arise, though its cause should be never so strongly in action; though it should be merely mental, and immediately affecting none of the senses. As an opiate, or spirituous liquors shall suspend the operation of grief, or fear, or anger, in spite of all our efforts to the contrary, and this by inducing in the body a disposition contrary to that which it receives from these passions.

## S E C T. V.

How the Sublime is produced.

**H**AVING considered terror as producing an unnatural tension and certain violent emotions of the nerves ; it easily follows, from what we have just said, that whatever is fitted to produce such a tension, must be productive of a passion similar to terror ||, and consequently must be a source of the sublime, though it should have no idea of danger connected with it. So that little remains towards shewing the cause of the sublime, but to shew that the instances we gave of it, in the second part, are of such things, as are fitted by nature to produce this sort of tension, either by the primary operation of the mind or the body. With regard to such things as affect by the associated idea of danger, there can be no doubt but that they produce terror, and act by some modification of that passion ; and that terror, when sufficiently violent, raises the emotions of the body just mentioned, can as little be doubted. But if the sublime is built on terror, or some passion like it, which has pain for its object ; it is previously proper to enquire how any species of delight can be derived from a cause so apparently

parently contrary to it. I say, *delight*, because, as I have often remarked, it is very evidently different in its cause, and in its own nature, from actual and positive pleasure.

## S E C T. VI.

How pain can be a cause of delight.

**P**ROVIDENCE has so ordered it, that a state of rest and inaction, however it may flatter some principle of indolence in us, should be productive of many inconveniences; that it should generate such disorders, as may force us to have recourse to some labour, as a thing absolutely requisite to make us pass our lives with tolerable satisfaction; for the nature of rest is to suffer all the parts of our bodies to fall into such a relaxation, as not only disables the members from performing their functions, but takes away that vigour which is requisite towards the performing the natural and necessary secretions. At the same time, that in this languid inactive state, the nerves are more liable to the most horrid convulsions, than when they are sufficiently braced and strengthened. Melancholy, dejection, despair, and often self-murder, is the consequence of the gloomy view we take of things

things in this relaxed state of body. The best remedy for all these evils is exercise or *labour*; and labour is a surmounting of *difficulties*, an exertion of the contracting power of the muscles; and as such resembles pain, which consists in tension or contraction, in every thing but degree. Labour is not only requisite to preserve the coarser organs in a state fit for their functions, but it is equally necessary to these finer and more delicate organs, on which, and by which, the imagination, and perhaps the other mental powers, act. Since it is probable, that not only the inferior parts of the soul, as the passions are called, but the understanding itself makes use of some fine corporeal instruments in its operations; though what they are, and where they are, may be somewhat hard to settle: but that it does make use of such, appears from hence; that a long exercise of the mental powers induces a remarkable lassitude of the whole body; and on the other hand, that great bodily labour, or pain, weakens, and sometimes actually destroys the mental faculties. Now, as a due exercise is essential to the coarse muscular parts of the constitution, and that without this rousing they would become languid, and diseased, and clogged with heterogeneous and hurtful matter; the very same rule holds with regard

gard to the former ; to have them in proper order, they must be shaken and worked to a proper degree.

## S E C T. VII,

EXERCISE necessary for the finer organs.

**A**S common labour, which is a mode of pain, is the exercise of the grosser, a mode of terror is the exercise of the finer parts of the system ; and if a certain mode of pain is of such a nature as to act upon the eye or the ear, as they are the most delicate organs, it approaches more nearly to that which has a mental cause. In all these cases, if the pain and terror are so modified as not to be actually noxious ; if the pain is not carried to violence, and the terror is not conversant about the present destruction of the person, as these emotions clear the parts, whether fine, or gross, of a dangerous and troublesome incumbrance, they are capable of producing delight ; not pleasure, but a sort of delightful horror, a sort of tranquility tinged with terror ; which as it belongs to self-preservation is one of the strongest of all the passions. Its object is the sublime †.

† Part 2. sect. 2.

Its highest degree I call *astonishment*; the subordinate degrees are awe, reverence, and respect, which by the very etymology of the words shew from what source they are derived, and how they stand distinguished from positive pleasure.

## S E C T. VIII.

Why things not dangerous produce a passion like T E R R O R.

† **A** Mode of terror, or of pain, is always the cause of the sublime. For terror, or associated danger, the foregoing explication is, I believe, sufficient. It will require something more trouble to shew, that such examples, as I have given of the sublime in the second part, are capable of producing a mode of pain, and of being thus allied to terror, and to be accounted for on the same principles. And first of such objects as are great in their dimensions. I speak of visual objects.

† Part 1. sect. 7. Part. 2. sect. 2.

## S E C T. XI.

Why vifual objects of great dimenfions are  
Sublime.

**V**ISION is performed by having a picture formed by the rays of light which are reflected from the object, painted in one piece, instantaneously, on the retina, or laft nervous part of the eye. Or, according to others, there is but one point of any object painted on the eye in fuch a manner as to be perceived at once; but by moving the eye, we gather up with great celerity, the feveral parts of the object, fo as to form one uniform piece. If the former opinion be allowed, it will be confidered, that a body of great dimenfions,\* though all the light reflected from it fhould ftrike the eye in one inftant; yet with regard to its extent we muft fuppofe it formed of a vaft number of diftinct points, every one of which, or the ray from every one, makes an impreffion on the retina. So that, though the image of one point fhould caufe but a fmall tenfion of this membrane, another, and another, and another ftroke, muft

\* Part 2. feft. 7:

in their progress cause a very great one, until it arrives at last to the highest degree; and the whole capacity of the eye, vibrating in all its parts must approach near to the nature of what causes pain, and consequently must produce an idea of the sublime. Or if we take it, that one point only of an object is distinguishable at once; the matter will amount nearly to the same thing, or rather it will make the origin of the sublime from greatness of dimension yet clearer. For if but one point is observed at once, the eye must traverse the vast space of such bodies with great quickness, and consequently the fine nerves and muscles destined to the motion of that part must be very much strained; and their great sensibility must make them the more affected by it. Besides, it signifies just nothing to the effect produced, whether a body has its parts connected and makes its impression at once; or making but one impression of a point at a time, it causes a succession of the same, or others, so quickly, as to make them seem united; as is evident from the common effect of whirling about a lighted torch or piece of wood; which if done with celerity, seems a circle of fire.



## S E C T. X.

UNITY why requisite to vastness.

**I**T may be objected to this theory, that the eye generally receives an equal number of rays at all times, and that therefore a great object cannot affect it by the number of rays, more than that variety of objects which the eye must always discern whilst it remains open. But to this I answer, that admitting an equal number of rays, or an equal quantity of luminous particles to strike the eye at all times, yet if these rays frequently vary their nature, now to blue, now to red, and so on, or their manner of termination as to a number of petty squares, triangles, or the like, at every change, whether of colour or shape, the organ has a sort of relaxation or rest, which prevents that tension, that species of labour which is allied to pain, and causes the sublime. For the sum total of things of various kinds, though it should equal the number of the uniform parts composing some *one* entire object, is not equal in its effect upon the organs of our bodies. It is next to rest in all things, to vary our labour; and it is not so only in our labours, but in our studies. Besides this, there is a very strong reason for the difference. The mind

in reality hardly ever can attend diligently to more than one thing at a time ; if this thing be little, the effect is little, and a number of other little objects cannot engage the attention ; the mind is bounded by the bounds of the object ; and what is not attended to, and what does not exist, are much the same in the effect ; but the eye or the mind (for in this case there is no difference) in great uniform objects does not readily arrive at their bounds ; it has no rest, whilst it contemplates them ; the image is much the same every where. So that every thing great by its quantity must necessarily be, one, simple and entire.

## S E C T. XI.

## The artificial INFINITE.

**W**E have observed, that a species of greatness arises from the artificial infinite ; and that this consists in an uniform succession of great parts : we observed too, that the same uniform succession had a like power in sounds. But because the effects of many things are clearer in one of the senses than in another, and that they all bear an analogy to, and illustrate one another ; I shall begin with this power in sounds, as the cause of the sublimity from succession

cession is rather more obvious in the sense of hearing. And I shall here once for all observe, that an investigation of the natural and mechanical causes of our passions, besides the curiosity of the subject, gives, if they are discovered, a double strength and lustre to any rules we deliver on such matters. When the ear receives any simple sound, it is struck by a single pulse of the air, which makes the ear-drum and the other membranous parts vibrate according to the nature and species of the stroke. If the stroke be strong, the organ of hearing suffers a considerable degree of tension. If the stroke be repeated pretty soon after; the repetition causes an expectation of another stroke. And it must be observed, that expectation itself causes a tension. This is apparent in many animals, who, when they prepare for hearing any sound, rouse themselves, and prick up their ears; so that here the effect of the sounds is considerably augmented by a new auxiliary, the expectation. But though after a number of strokes, we expect still more, not being able to ascertain the exact time of their arrival, when they arrive, they produce a sort of surprise, which increases this tension yet further. For, I have observed, that when at any time I have waited very earnestly for some sound, that returned at intervals, (as the successive firing of

K 4

cannon

cannon) though I fully expected the return of the sound, when it came, it always made me start a little; the ear-drum suffered a convulsion, and the whole body consented with it. The tension of the part thus increasing at every blow, by the united forces of the stroke itself, the expectation, and the surprise, it is worked up to such a pitch as to be capable of the sublime; it is brought just to the verge of pain. Even when the cause has ceased; the organs of hearing being often successively struck in a similar manner, continue to vibrate in that manner for some time longer; this is an additional help to the greatness of the effect.

## S E C T. XII.

The vibrations must be similar.

**B**UT if the vibration be not similar at every impression, it can never be carried beyond the number of actual impressions; for move any body, as a pendulum, in one way, and it will continue to oscillate in an arch of the same circle, until the known causes make it rest; but if after first putting it in motion in one direction, you push it into another, it can never reassume the first direction; because it can never move itself, and consequently it can have but the effect of that last motion; whereas,

whereas, if in the same direction you act upon it several times, it will describe a greater arch, and move a longer time.

## S E C T. XIII.

The effects of SUCCESSION in visual objects explained.

**I**F we can comprehend clearly how things operate upon one of our senses; there can be very little difficulty in conceiving in what manner they affect the rest. To say a great deal therefore upon the corresponding affections of every sense, would tend rather to fatigue us by an useless repetition, than to throw any new light upon the subject, by that ample and diffuse manner of treating it; but as in this discourse we chiefly attach ourselves to the sublime, as it affects the eye, we shall consider particularly why a successive disposition of uniform parts in the same right line should be sublime,\* and upon what principle it is enabled to make a comparatively small quantity of matter so disposed produce a grander effect, than a much larger quantity disposed in another manner. To avoid the perplexity of general notions; let us set before our eyes a

\* Part 2. sect. 10.

line;

line; let us take our stand, in such a manner, that the eye may shoot along this colonnade, for it has its best effect in this view. In our present situation it is plain, that the rays from the first round pillar will cause in the eye a vibration of that species; an image of the pillar itself. The pillar immediately succeeding increases it; that which follows renews and enforces the impression; each in its order as it succeeds, repeats impulse after impulse, and stroke after stroke, until the eye long exercised in one particular way cannot lose that object immediately; and being violently roused by this continued agitation, it presents the mind with a grand or sublime conception. But instead of viewing a rank of uniform pillars; let us suppose, that they succeed each other, a round and a square one alternately. In this case the vibration caused by the first round pillar perishes as soon as it is formed; and one of quite another sort (the square) directly occupies its place; which however it resigns as quickly to the round one; and thus the eye proceeds, alternately, taking up one image and laying down another, as long as the building continues. From whence it is obvious, that at the last pillar, the impression is as far from continuing as it was at the very first; because in fact, the sensory can receive no distinct impression but from

the last; and it can never of itself resume a dissimilar impression: besides, every variation of the object is a rest and relaxation to the organs of sight; and these reliefs prevent that violent emotion so necessary to produce the sublime. To produce therefore a perfect grandeur in such things as we have been mentioning, there should be a perfect simplicity, an absolute uniformity in disposition, shape and colouring. Upon this principle of succession and uniformity it may be asked, why a long bare wall should not be a more sublime object than a colonnade; since the succession is no way interrupted; since the eye meets no check; since nothing more uniform can be conceived? A long bare wall is certainly not so grand an object as a colonnade of the same length and height. It is not altogether difficult to account for this difference. When we look at a naked wall, from the evenness of the object, the eye runs along its whole space, and arrives quickly at its termination; the eye meets nothing which may interrupt its progress; but then it meets nothing which may detain it a proper time to produce a very great and lasting effect. The view of a bare wall, if it be of a great height and length, is undoubtedly grand: but this is only *one* idea, and not a *repetition* of *similar* ideas; it is therefore great, not so much upon

upon the principle of *infinity*, as upon that of *vastness*. But we are not so powerfully affected with any one impulse, unless it be one of a prodigious force, as we are with a succession of similar impulses; because the nerves of the sensory do not (if I may use the expression) acquire a habit of repeating the same feeling in such a manner as to continue it longer than its cause is in action; besides, all the effects which I have attributed to expectation and surprize in sect. 11. can have no place in a bare wall.

## S E C T. XIV.

Locke's opinion concerning darkness,  
considered.

**I**T is Mr. Locke's opinion, that darkness is not naturally an idea of terror; and that, though an excessive light is painful to the sense, that the greatest excess of darkness is no ways troublesome. He observes indeed in another place, that a nurse or an old woman having once associated the ideas of ghosts and goblins with that of darkness; night ever after becomes painful and horrible to the imagination. The authority of this great man is doubtless as great, as that of any man can be,  
and



and it seems to stand in the way of our general principle. \* We have considered darkness as a cause of the sublime; and we have all along considered the sublime as depending on some modification of pain or terror; so that, if darkness be no way painful or terrible to any, who have not had their minds early tainted with superstitions, it can be no source of the sublime to them. But with all deference to such an authority; it seems to me, that an association of a more general nature; an association which takes in all mankind may make darkness terrible; for in utter darkness, it is impossible to know in what degree of safety we stand; we are ignorant of the objects that surround us; we may every moment strike against some dangerous obstruction; we may fall down a precipice the first step we take; and if any enemy approach, we know not in what quarter to defend ourselves; in such a case strength is no sure protection; wisdom can only act by guess; the boldest are staggered, and he who would pray for nothing else towards his defence, is forced to pray for light.

Ζευ πάτερ, ἀλλὰ σὺ ρύσαι ἀπ' ἡρώος υἱᾶς Ἀχαιῶν  
 Πόισσον δ' αἰθρῆν, δὸς δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδέσθαι.  
 Ἐν δὲ φαει κ' ὀλεῶν. —

\* Part 2. sect. 3.

As to the association of ghosts and goblins; surely it is more natural to think, that darkness being originally an idea of terror, was chosen as a fit scene for such terrible representations, than that such representations have made darkness terrible. The mind of man very easily slides into an error of the former sort; but it is very hard to imagine, that an idea so universally terrible in all times, and in all countries, as darkness has been, could possibly have been owing to a set of idle stories, or to any cause of a nature so trivial, and of an operation so precarious.

## S E C T. XV.

DARKNESS terrible by its own nature.

**P**ERHAPS it may appear on enquiry, that blackness and darkness are in some degree painful by their natural operation, independent of any associations whatsoever. I must observe, that the ideas of darkness and blackness are much the same, and that they differ only in this, that blackness is a more confined idea. Mr. Cheselden has given us a very curious story of a boy, who had been born blind, and continued so until he was thirteen or fourteen years old; he was then couched for a cataract,

taract, by which operation he received his sight. Among many remarkable particulars that attended his first perceptions, and judgments on visual objects, Cheselden tells us, that the first time the boy saw a black object, it gave him great uneasiness; and that some time after, upon accidentally seeing a negro woman, he was struck with great horror at the sight. The horror, in this case, can scarcely be supposed to arise from any association. The boy appears by the account to be particularly observing, and sensible for one of his age: and therefore, it is probable, if the great uneasiness he felt at the first sight of black had arisen from its connexion with any other disagreeable ideas, he would have observed and mentioned it. For an idea, disagreeable only by association, has the cause of its ill effect on the passions evident enough at the first impression; in ordinary cases, it is indeed frequently lost; but this is, because the original association was made very early, and the consequent impression repeated often. In our instance, there was no time for such an habit; and there is no reason to think, that the ill effects of black on his imagination were more owing to its connexion with any disagreeable ideas, than that the good effects of more cheerful colours were derived from their connexion

nexion with pleasing ones. They had both probably their effects from their natural operation.

### S E C T. XVI.

The cause why D A R K N E S S is terrible.

**I**T may be worth while to examine, how darknes can operate in such a manner as to cause pain; that is, to produce a tension in those nerves, which form the organs of sight. It may be observed, that still as we recede from the light, nature has so contrived it, that the pupil is enlarged by the retiring of the iris, in proportion to our recess. Now instead of declining from it but a little, suppose that we withdraw entirely from the light; it is reasonable to think, that the expansion of the iris is proportionably greater, and that this part may by great darknes come to be so expanded, as to stretch the nerves that compose it far beyond their natural tone; and by this means to produce a painful sensation. Such a tension it seems there certainly is, whilst we are involved in darknes; for in such a state whilst the eye remains open, there is a continual nisus to receive light, as appears by the flashes, and luminous appearances which often seem

seem in these circumstances to play before it ; and which can be nothing but the effect of spasms, produced by its own efforts in pursuit of its object ; for many other strong impulses will produce the idea of light in the eye, besides the substance of light itself, as we experience on many occasions. It may perhaps be objected, that the ill effects of darkness or blackness seem rather mental than corporeal ; and I own it is true, that they do so ; and so do all those that depend on the affections of the finer parts of our system. The ill effects of bad weather appear often no otherwise, than in a melancholy and dejection of spirits, though without doubt, in this case, the bodily organs suffer first, and the mind through these organs.

## S E C T. XVII.

### The effects of BLACKNESS.

**B**lackness is but a *partial darkness* ; and therefore it derives some of its powers from being mixed and surrounded with coloured bodies. In its own nature, it cannot be considered as a colour. Black bodies, reflecting none, or but a few rays, with regard to sight, are but as so many vacant spaces dispersed among the objects we view. When the eye

L light

lights on one of these vacuities, after having been kept in some degree of tension by the play of the adjacent colours upon it, it suddenly falls into a relaxation; out of which it as suddenly recovers by a convulsive spring. To illustrate this; let us consider, that when we intend to sit on a chair, and find it much lower than was expected, the shock is very violent; much more violent than could be thought from so slight a fall as the difference between one chair and another can possibly make. Or if, after descending a flight of stairs, we attempt inadvertently to take another step in the manner of the former ones, the shock is extremely rude and disagreeable; and by no art, can we cause such a shock by the same means, when we expect and prepare for it. When I say, that this is owing to having the change made contrary to expectation; I do not mean solely, when *them ind* expects. I mean likewise, that when any organ of sense is for some time affected in some one manner, if it be suddenly affected otherwise there ensues a convulsive motion; such a convulsion as is caused when any thing happens against the expectation of the mind. And though it may appear strange that such a change as produces a relaxation, should immediately produce a sudden convulsion; it is yet most certainly so, and so in all  
the

the senses. Every one knows that sleep is a relaxation ; and that silence, where nothing keeps the organs of hearing in action, is in general fittest to bring on this relaxation ; yet when a sort of murmuring sounds dispose a man to sleep, let these sounds cease suddenly, and the person immediately awakes ; that is, the parts are braced up suddenly, and he awakes. This I have often experienced myself, and I have heard the same from observing persons. In like manner, if a person in broad day light were falling asleep, to introduce a sudden darkness would prevent his sleep for that time, though silence and darkness in themselves, and not suddenly introduced, are very favourable to it. This I knew only by conjecture on the analogy of the senses when I first digested these observations ; but I have since experienced it. And I have often experienced, and so have a thousand others ; that on the first declining towards sleep, we have been suddenly awaked with a most violent start ; and that this start was generally preceded by a sort of dream of our falling down a precipice : whence does this strange motion arise ; but from the too sudden relaxation of the body, which by some mechanism in nature restores itself by as quick and vigorous an exertion of the contracting power of the muscles ? the dream itself is caused by this relaxa-

tion; and it is of too uniform nature to be attributed to any other cause. The parts relax too suddenly, which is in the nature of falling; and this accident of the body induces this image in the mind. When we are in a confirmed state of health and vigour, as all changes are then less violent with us, we can seldom complain of this disagreeable sensation.

## S E C T. XVIII.

The effects of BLACKNESS moderated.

**T**HOUGH the effects of black be painful originally, we must not think they always continue so. Custom reconciles us to every thing. After we have been used to the sight of black objects, the terror abates, and the smoothness or glossiness or some agreeable accident of bodies so coloured, softens in some measure the horror and sternness of their original nature; yet the nature of the original impression still continues. Black will always have something melancholy in it, because the sensory will always find the change to it from other colours too violent; or if it occupy the whole compass of the sight, it will then be darkness; and what was said of darkness, will be applicable here. I do not purpose to go  
into



into all that might be said to illustrate this theory of the effects of light and darkness; neither will I examine all the different effects produced by the various modifications and mixtures of these two causes. If the foregoing observations have any foundation in nature, I conceive them very sufficient to account for all the phænomena that can arise from all the combinations of black with other colours. To enter into every particular, or to answer every objection, would be an endless labour. We have only followed the most leading roads and we shall observe the same conduct in our enquiry into the cause of beauty.

## S E C T. XIX.

The physical cause of L O V E.

**W**HEN we have before us such objects as excite love and complacency, the body is affected, so far as I could observe, much in the following manner. The head reclines something on one side; the eyelids are more closed than usual, and the eyes roll gently with an inclination to the object, the mouth is a little opened, and the breath drawn slowly, with now and then a low sigh: the whole body is composed, and the hands fall

idly to the fides. All this is accompanied with an inward sense of melting and languor. These appearances are always proportioned to the degree of beauty in the object, and of sensibility in the observer. And this gradation from the highest pitch of beauty and sensibility, even to the lowest of mediocrity and indifference, and their correspondent effects, ought to be kept in view, else this description will seem exaggerated, which it certainly is not. But from this description it is almost impossible not to conclude, that beauty acts by relaxing the solids of the whole system. There are all the appearances of such a relaxation; and a relaxation somewhat below the natural tone seems to me to be the cause of all positive pleasure. This will, I conceive, appear beyond any reasonable doubt, if we can shew that such things as we have already observed to be the genuine constituents of beauty, have each of them separately taken a natural tendency to relax the fibres. And if it be allowed us, that the appearance of the human body, when all these properties are united together before the sensory, further favours this opinion, we may venture, I believe, to conclude, that the passion called love is produced by this relaxation. By the same method of reasoning, which we have used in the enquiry into  
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the causes of the sublime, we may likewise conclude, that as a beautiful object presented to the sense, by causing a relaxation in the body, produces the passion of love in the mind ; so if by any means the passion should first have its origin in the mind, a relaxation of the outward organs will as certainly ensue in a degree proportioned to the cause.

## S E C T. XX.

Why SMOOTHNESS is beautiful.

**I**T is to explain the true cause of visual beauty, that I call in the assistance of the other senses. If it appears that *smoothness* is a principal cause of pleasure to the touch, taste, smell, and hearing, it will be easily admitted a constituent of visual beauty, especially as we have before shewn, that this quality is found almost without exception in all bodies that are by general consent held beautiful. Now with respect to the sense of *feeling*, there can be no doubt that bodies which are rough and angular, rouse and vellicate the parts, causing a sense of pain, which consists in the violent tension or contraction of the muscular fibres. On the contrary, the application of smooth bodies relax ; gentle stroking with a smooth hand al-

lays violent pains and cramps, and relaxes the suffering parts from their unnatural tension; and it has therefore very often no mean effect in removing swellings and obstructions. The sense of feeling is highly gratified with smooth bodies. A bed smoothly laid, and soft, that is, where the resistance is every way inconsiderable, is a great luxury, disposing to an universal relaxation, and inducing beyond any thing else, that species of it called sleep.

## S E C T. XXI.

## SWEETNESS, its nature.

**N**OR is it only in the touch, that smooth bodies cause positive pleasure by relaxation. In the smell and taste, we find all things agreeable to them, and which are commonly called sweet, to be of a smooth nature, and that they all evidently tend to relax their respective sensories. Let us first consider the taste. Since it is most easy to enquire into the property of liquids, and since all things seem to want a fluid vehicle to make them tasted at all, I intend rather to consider the liquid than the solid parts of our food. The vehicles of all tastes are *water* and *oil*.

And

And what determines the taste is some salt, which affects variously according to its nature, or its manner of being combined with other things. Water and oil simply considered are capable of giving some pleasure to the taste. Water, when simple, is insipid, inodorous, colourless, and smooth, it is found when *not cold* to be a great resolver of spasms, and lubricator of the fibres; this power it probably owes to its smoothness. For as fluidity depends, according to the most general opinion, on the roundness, smoothness, and weak cohesion of the component parts of any body; and as water acts merely as a simple fluid, it follows, that the cause of its fluidity is likewise the cause of its relaxing quality; namely, the smoothness and slippery texture of its parts. The other fluid vehicle of tastes is *oil*. This too, when simple, is somewhat insipid, inodorous, colourless, and smooth to the touch and taste. It is smoother than water, and in many cases yet more relaxing. Oil is in some degree pleasant to the eye, the touch and the taste, insipid as it is. Water is not so grateful, which I do not know on what principle to account for, other than that that water is not so soft and smooth. Suppose that to this oil or water were added a certain quantity of a specific salt, which had a power of putting

ting the nervous papillæ of the tongue into a gentle vibratory motion ; as suppose sugar dissolved in it. The smoothness of the oil, and the vibratory power of the salt, cause the sense we call sweetness. In all sweet bodies, sugar, or a substance very little different from sugar, is constantly found ; every species of salt examined by the microscope has its own distinct, regular, invariable form. That of nitre is a pointed oblong ; that of sea salt an exact cube ; that of sugar a perfect globe. If you have tried how smooth globular bodies, as the marbles with which boys amuse themselves, have affected the touch when they are rolled backward and forward and over one another, you will easily conceive how sweetness, which consists in a salt of such nature, affects the taste ; for a single globe, though somewhat pleasant to the feeling, by the regularity of its form, and the somewhat too sudden deviation of its parts from a right line, is nothing near so pleasant to the touch as several globes, where the hand gently rises to one and falls to another ; and this pleasure is greatly increased if the globes are in motion, and sliding over one another ; for this soft variety prevents that weariness, which the uniform disposition of the several globes would otherwise produce. Thus in sweet liquors, the parts of the fluid vehicle  
though

though most probably round, are yet so minute as to conceal the figure of their component parts from the nicest inquisition of the microscope; and consequently being so excessively minute, they have a sort of flat simplicity to the taste, resembling the effects of plain smooth bodies to the touch; for if a body be composed of round parts excessively small, and packed pretty closely together, the surface will be both to the sight and touch as if it were nearly plain and smooth. It is clear from their unveiling their figure to the microscope, that the particles of sugar are considerably larger than those of water or oil, and consequently that their effects from their roundness will be more distinct and palpable to the nervous papillæ of that nice organ the tongue: they will induce that sense called sweetness, which in a weak manner we discover in oil, and in a yet weaker in water; for insipid as they are, water and oil are in some degree sweet; and it may be observed, that insipid things of all kinds approach more nearly to the nature of sweetness than to that of any other taste.

## S E C T. XXII.

## SWEETNESS relaxing.

**I**N the other senses we have remarked, that smooth things are relaxing. Now it ought to appear that sweet things, which are the smooth of taste, are relaxing too. That sweet things are generally so is evident, because all such, especially those which are most oily, taken frequently or in a large quantity, very much enfeeble the tone of the stomach. Sweet smells, which bear a great affinity to sweet tastes, relax very remarkably. The smell of flowers disposes people to drowsiness; and this relaxing effect is further apparent from the prejudice which people of weak nerves receive from their use. It were worth while to examine, whether tastes of this kind, sweet ones, tastes that are caused by smooth oils and a relaxing salt are not the originally pleasant tastes. For many which use has rendered such, were not at all agreeable at first. The way to examine this is, to try what nature has originally provided for us, which she has undoubtedly made originally pleasant: and to analyse this provision. *Milk* is the first support of our childhood. The component parts of this are water, oil, and



and a sort of a very sweet salt called the sugar of milk. All these when blended have a great *smoothness* to the taste, and a relaxing quality to the skin. The next thing children covet is *fruit*, and of fruits, those principally which are sweet; and every one knows that the sweetness of fruit is caused by a subtle oil and such a salt as that mentioned in the last section. Afterwards, custom, habit, the desire of novelty, and a thousand other causes, so mix, adulterate, and change our palates, that we can no longer reason with any satisfaction about them. Before we quit this article we must observe; that as smooth things are, as such, agreeable to the taste, and are found of a relaxing quality; so on the other hand, things which are found by experience to be of a strengthening quality, and fit to brace the fibres, are almost universally rough and pungent to the taste, and in many cases rough even to the touch. We often apply the quality of sweetness, metaphorically, to visual objects. For the better carrying on this remarkable analogy of the senses, we may here call sweetness the beautiful of the taste.

## S E C T. XXIII.

## VARIATION, why beautiful.

**A**NOTHER principal property of beautiful objects is, that the line of their parts is continually varying its direction; but it varies it by a very insensible deviation, it never varies it so quickly as to surprize, or by the sharpness of its angle to cause any twitching or convulsion of the optic nerve. Nothing long continued in the same manner, nothing very suddenly varied can be beautiful; because both are opposite to that agreeable relaxation, which is the characteristic effect of beauty. It is thus in all the senses. A motion in a right line, is that manner of moving next to a very gentle descent, in which we meet the least resistance, yet it is not that manner of moving, which next to a descent, wearies us the least. Rest certainly tends to relax; yet there is a species of motion which relaxes more than rest; a gentle oscillatory motion, a rising and falling. Rocking sets children to sleep better than absolute rest; there is indeed scarce any thing at that age, which gives more pleasure than to be gently lifted up and down; the manner of playing which their nurses use

with children, and the weighing and swinging used afterwards by themselves as a favourite amusement, evince this very sufficiently. Most people must have observed the sort of sense they have had, on being swiftly drawn in an easy coach, on a smooth turf, with gradual ascents and declivities. This will give a better idea of the beautiful, and point out its probable cause better than almost any thing else. On the contrary; when one is hurried over a rough, rocky, broken road, the pain felt by these sudden inequalities shews why similar sights, feelings and sounds, are so contrary to beauty; and with regard to the feeling, it is exactly the same in its effect, or very nearly the same, whether, for instance, I move my hand along the surface of a body of a certain shape, or whether such a body is moved along my hand. But to bring this analogy of the senses home to the eye; if a body presented to that sense has such a waving surface that the rays of light reflected from it are in a continual insensible deviation from the strongest to the weakest, which is always the case in a surface gradually unequal, it must be exactly similar in its effect on the eye and touch; one of which operates on it directly, on the other indirectly. And this body will be beautiful if the lines which compose its surface are not  
continued,

continued, even so varied, in a manner that may weary or dissipate the attention.

## S E C T. XXI.

### Concerning S M A L L N E S S.

**T**O avoid a sameness which may arise from the too frequent repetition of the same reasonings, and of illustrations of the same nature, I will not enter very minutely into every particular that regards beauty, as it is founded on the disposition of its quantity, or its quantity itself. In speaking of the magnitude of bodies there is great uncertainty, because the ideas of great and small, are terms almost entirely relative to the species of the objects, which are infinite. It is true, that having once fixed the species of any object, and the dimensions common in the individuals of that species, we may observe some that exceed, and some that fall short of the ordinary standard: these which greatly exceed, are by that excess, provided the species itself be not very small, rather great and terrible than beautiful; but as in the animal world, and in a good measure in the vegetable world likewise, the qualities that constitute beauty may possibly be united to things of greater dimensions;

sions ; when they are so united they constitute a species something different both from the sublime and beautiful, which I have before called *Fine* ; but this kind I imagine has not such a power on the passions, either as vast bodies have which are endued with the correspondent qualities of the sublime ; or as the qualities of beauty have when united in a small object. The affection produced by large bodies adorned with the spoils of beauty, is a tension continually relieved ; which approaches nearer to the nature of mediocrity. But if I were to say how I find myself affected upon such occasions, I should say, that the sublime suffers less by being united to some of the qualities of beauty, than beauty does by being joined to greatness of quantity, or any other properties of the sublime. There is something so over-ruling in whatever inspires us with awe, in all things which belong ever so remotely to terror, that nothing else can stand in their presence. There lie the qualities of beauty either dead and unoperative ; or at most exerted to mollify the rigour and sternness of the terror, which is the natural concomitant of greatness. Besides the extraordinary great in every species, the opposite to this, the dwarfish and diminutive ought to be considered. Liteness, merely as such, has nothing contrary to the idea of beauty. The humming bird both

in shape and colouring yields to none of the winged species, of which it is the least; and perhaps his beauty is enhanced by his smallness. But there are animals, which when they are extremely small are rarely (if ever) beautiful. There is a dwarfish size of men and women, which is almost constantly so gross and massive in comparison of their height, that they present us with a very disagreeable image. But if a man was found not above two or three feet high, supposing such a person to have all the parts of his body of a delicacy suitable to such a size, and otherwise endued with the common qualities of other beautiful bodies; I am pretty well convinced that a person of such a stature might well be considered as beautiful; might be the object of love; might give us very pleasing ideas on viewing him. The only thing which could possibly interpose to check this pleasure is, that such creatures, however formed, are unusual, and are often therefore considered as something monstrous. The large and gigantic, though very compatible with the sublime, is contrary to the beautiful. It is impossible to suppose a giant to be the object of love. When we let our imaginations loose in romance, the ideas we naturally annex to that size are those of tyranny, cruelty, injustice, and every thing horrid

rid and abominable. We paint the giant ravaging the country, plundering the innocent traveller, and afterwards gorging himself with his half-living flesh: such are Polyphemus, Cacus, and others, who make such a figure in romances and heroic poems. The event we attend to with the greatest satisfaction is their defeat and death. I do not remember in all that multitude of deaths with which the Iliad is filled, that the fall of any man remarkable for his great stature and strength touches us with pity; nor does it appear that the author, so well read in human nature, ever intended it should. It is Simoisius in the soft bloom of youth, torn from his parents, who tremble for a courage so ill suited to his strength; it is another hurried by war from the new embraces of his bride; young, and fair, and a novice to the field, who melts us by his untimely fate. Achilles, in spite of the many qualities of beauty which Homer has bestowed on his outward form, and the many great virtues with which he has adorned his mind, can never make us love him. It may be observed, that Homer has given the Trojans, whose fate he has designed to excite our compassion, infinitely more of the amiable social virtues than he has distributed among his Greeks. With regard to the Trojans, the

passion he chuses to raise is pity; a passion founded on love; and these *lesser*, and if I may say, domestic virtues, are by far the most amiable. But he has made the Greeks far their superiors in the politic and military virtues. The councils of Priam are weak; the arms of Hector comparatively feeble; his courage far below that of Achilles. Yet we love Priam more than Agamemnon, and Hector more than his conqueror Achilles. Admiration is the passion which Homer<sup>s</sup> would excite in favour of the Greeks, and he has done it by bestowing on them the virtues which have but little to do with love. This short digression is perhaps not wholly beside our purpose, where our business is to shew, that objects of great dimensions are incompatible with beauty, the more incompatible as they are greater; whereas the small, if ever they fail of beauty, this failure is not to be attributed to their size.

## S E C T. XXVI.

## O F C O L O U R.

**W**ITH regard to colour, the disquisition is almost infinite; but I conceive the principles laid down in the beginning of this part are sufficient to account for the



the effects of them all, as well as for the agreeable effect of transparent bodies, whether fluid or solid. Suppose I look at a bottle of muddy liquor, of a blue or red colour, the blue or red rays cannot pass clearly to the eye, but are suddenly and unequally stopped by the intervention of little opaque bodies, which without preparation change the idea, and change it too into one disagreeable in its own nature, conformable to the principles laid down in sect. 24. But when the ray passes without such opposition through the glass or liquor, when the glass or liquor are quite transparent, the light is something softened in the passage, which makes it more agreeable even as light; and the liquor reflecting all the rays of its proper colour *evenly*, it has such an effect on the eye, as smooth opaque bodies have on the eye and touch. So that the pleasure here is compounded of the softness of the transmitted, and the evenness of the reflected light. This pleasure may be heightened by the common principles in other things, if the shape of the glass which holds the transparent liquor be so judiciously varied, as to present the colour gradually and interchangeably weakened and strengthened with all that variety which judgment in affairs of this nature shall suggest. On a review of all that has been said of the effects,

as well as the causes of both ; it will appear, that the sublime and beautiful are built on principles very different, and that their affections are as different : the great has terror for its basis ; which, when it is modified, causes that emotion in the mind, which I have called astonishment ; the beautiful is founded on mere positive pleasure, and excites in the soul that feeling, which is called love. Their causes have made the subject of this fourth part.

The end of the Fourth Part.



A

# Philosophical Enquiry

INTO THE

ORIGIN of our IDEAS  
OF THE

SUBLIME and BEAUTIFUL.

PART V.

SECT. I.

Of WORDS.

**N**A TURAL things affect us, by the laws of that connexion, which providence has established between certain motions and configurations of bodies, and certain consequent feelings in our minds. Painting affects in the same manner, but with the superadded pleasure of imitation; architecture affects by the laws of nature, and the law of reason; from which latter result the rules of proportion, which make a work to be praised or censured, in the whole or in some

part, when the end for which it was designed is or is not properly answered. But as to words ; they seem to me to affect us in a manner very different from that in which we are affected by natural things, or by painting or architecture ; yet words have as considerable a share in exciting ideas of beauty and of the sublime as any of these, and sometimes a much greater than any of them ; therefore an enquiry into the manner by which they excite such emotions is far from being unnecessary in a discourse of this kind.

## S E C T. II.

The common effect of P O E T R Y, not  
by raising ideas of things.

**T**HE common notion of the power of poetry and eloquence, as well as that of words in ordinary conversation, is ; that they affect the mind by raising in it ideas of those things for which custom has appointed them to stand. To examine the truth of this notion, it may be requisite to observe that words may be divided into three sorts ; the first are such as represent many simple ideas *united by nature* to form some one determinate composition, as man, horse, tree, castle, &c. These I call  
*aggregates*

*aggregate words.* The second, are they that stand for some one simple idea of such compositions and no more, as red, blue, round, square, and the like; these I call *simple abstract* words. The third, are those, which are formed by an union, an *arbitrary* union of both the others, and of various relations concerning them, in greater or lesser degrees of complexity, as virtue, honour, persuasion, magistrate, and the like; these I call *compounded abstract* words. Words, I am sensible, are capable of being classed into more curious distinctions; but these seem to be natural, and enough for our purpose; and they are disposed in that order in which they are commonly taught, and in which the mind gets the ideas they are substituted for. I shall begin with the third sort of words; compound abstracts, such as virtue, honour, persuasion, docility; of these I am convinced, that whatever power they may have on the passions, they do not derive it from any representation raised in the mind of the things for which they stand. As compositions, they are not real essences, and hardly cause, I think, any real ideas. No body, I believe, immediately on hearing the sounds, virtue, liberty, or honour, conceives any precise notion of the particular modes of action and thinking, together with the mixt and  
simple

simple ideas, and the several relations of them for which these words are substituted; neither has he any general idea, compounded of them; for if he had, then some of those particular ones, though indistinct perhaps, and confused, might come soon to be perceived. But this, I take it, is hardly ever the case. For put yourself upon analysing one of these words, and you must reduce it from one set of general words to another, and then into the simple abstracts and aggregates, in a much longer series than may be at first imagined, before any real idea emerges to light, and before you come to discover any thing like the first principles of such compositions; and when you have made such a discovery of the original ideas, the effect of the composition is utterly lost. A train of thinking of this sort, is much too long to be pursued in the ordinary ways of conversation, nor is it at all necessary that it should. Such words are in reality but mere sounds; but they are sounds, which being used on particular occasions, wherein we receive some good, or suffer some evil, or see others affected with good or evil, or that we hear applied to other interesting things or events, and which being applied in such a variety of cases that we know readily by habit to what things they belong, they produce in the mind, when-

whenever they are afterwards mentioned, effects similar to those of their occasions. The sounds being often used without reference to any particular occasion, and carrying still their first impressions, they at last utterly lose their connection with the particular occasions that gave rise to them ; yet the sound without any annexed notion continues to operate as before.

### S E C T. III.

#### General words before I D E A S.

**M**R. Locke has somewhere observed with his usual sagacity, that most general words, those belonging to virtue and vice, good and evil, especially, are taught before the particular modes of action to which they belong are presented to the mind ; and with them, the love of the one, and the abhorrence of the other ; for the minds of children are so ductile, that a nurse, or any person about a child, by seeming pleased or displeased with any thing, or even any word, may give the disposition of the child a similar turn. When afterwards, the several occurrences in life come to be applied to these words ; and that which is pleasant often appears under the name of evil ; and what is disagreeable to nature is called

called good and virtuous; a strange confusion of ideas and affections arises in the minds of many; and an appearance of no small contradiction between their notions and their actions. There are many, who love virtue, and who detest vice, and this not from hypocrisy or affectation, who notwithstanding this very frequently act ill and wickedly in particulars without the least remorse; because these particular occasions never came into view, when the passions on the side of virtue were so warmly affected by certain words heated originally by the breath of others; and for this reason, it is hard to repeat certain sets of words, though owned by themselves unoperative, without being in some degree affected, especially if a warm and affecting tone of voice accompanies them, as suppose,

*Wise, valiant, generous, good and great.*

These words, by having no application, ought to be unoperative; but when words commonly sacred to great occasions are used, we are affected by them even without the occasions. When words which have been generally so applied are put together without any rational view, or in such a manner that they do not rightly agree with each other, the stile

is



is called bombast. And it requires in several cases much good sense and experience to be guarded against the force of such language; because the more that propriety is neglected, the greater number of these affecting words may be taken into the service, and the greater variety may be indulged in combining them.

#### S E C T. IV.

##### The effect of WORDS.

**I**F words have all their possible extent of power, three effects arise in the mind of the hearer. The first is, the *sound*; the second, the *picture*, or representation of the thing signified by the sound; the third is, the *affection* of the soul produced by one or by both of the foregoing. *Compounded abstract* words, of which we have been speaking, (honour, justice, liberty, and the like,) produce the first and the last of these effects, but not the second. *Simple abstracts*, are used to signify some one simple idea without much adverting to others which may chance to attend it, as blue, green, hot, cold, and the like; these are capable of affecting all three of the purposes of words; as the *aggregate* words, man, castle, horse, &c. are in a yet higher degree.

But

But I am of opinion, that the most general effect even of these words, does not arise from their forming pictures of the several things they would represent in the imagination; because on a very diligent examination of my own mind, and getting others to consider theirs, I do not find that once in twenty times any such picture is formed, and when it is, there is most commonly a particular effort of the imagination for that purpose. But the aggregate words operate as I said of the compound abstracts, not by presenting any image to the mind, but by having from use the same effect on being mentioned, that their original has when it is seen. Suppose we were to read a passage to this effect. "The river Danube rises in a moist and mountainous soil in the heart of Germany, where winding too and fro it waters several principalities, until turning into Austria and leaving the walls of Vienna it passes into Hungary; there with a vast flood augmented by the Saave and the Drave it quits Christendom, and rolling through the barbarous countries which border on Tartary, it enters by many mouths into the Black sea." In this description many things are mentioned, as mountains, rivers, cities, the sea, &c. But let any body examine himself, and see whether he  
has

has had impressed on his imagination any pictures of a river, mountain, watery soil, Germany, &c. Indeed it is impossible, in the rapidity and quick succession of words in conversation, to have ideas both of the sound of the word, and of the thing represented; besides, some words expressing real essences, are so mixed with others of a general and nominal import, that it is impracticable to jump from sense to thought, from particulars to generals, from things to words, in such a manner as to answer the purposes of life; nor is it necessary that we should.

### S E C T. V.

Examples that WORDS may affect without raising IMAGES.

**I** Find it very hard to persuade several that their passions are affected by words from whence they have no ideas; and yet harder to convince them, that in the ordinary course of conversation we are sufficiently understood without raising any images of the things concerning which we speak. It seems to be an odd subject of dispute with any man, whether he has ideas in his mind or not. Of this at first view, every man, in his own forum,

ought to judge without appeal. But strange as it may appear, we are often at a loss to know what ideas we have of things, or whether we have any ideas at all upon some subjects. It even requires some attention to be thoroughly satisfied on this head. Since I wrote these papers I found two very striking instances of the possibility there is, that a man may hear words without having any idea of the things which they represent, and yet afterwards be capable of returning them to others, combined in a new way, and with great propriety, energy and instruction. The first instance, is that of Mr. Blacklock, a poet blind from his birth. Few men blessed with the most perfect sight can describe visual objects with more spirit and justness than this blind man; which cannot possibly be owing to his having a clearer conception of the things he describes than is common to other persons. Mr. Spence, in an elegant preface which he has written to the works of this poet, reasons very ingeniously, and I imagine for the most part very rightly upon the cause of this extraordinary phenomenon; but I cannot altogether agree with him, that some improprieties in language and thought which occur in these poems have arisen from the blind poet's imperfect conception of visual objects, since such improprieties, and much greater,

greater, may be found in writers even of an higher class than Mr. Blacklock, and who, notwithstanding, possessed the faculty of seeing in its full perfection. Here is a poet doubtless as much affected by his own descriptions as any that reads them can be; and yet he is affected with this strong enthusiasm by things of which he neither has, nor can possibly have any idea further than that of a bare sound; and why may not those who read his works be affected in the same manner that he was, with as little of any real ideas of the things described? The second instance is of Mr. Saunderson, professor of mathematics in the university of Cambridge. This learned man had acquired great knowledge in natural philosophy, in astronomy, and whatever sciences depend upon mathematical skill. What was the most extraordinary, and the most to my purpose, he gave excellent lectures upon light and colours; and this man taught others the theory of those ideas which they had, and which he himself undoubtedly had not. But the truth is, that the words red, blue, green, answered to him as well as the ideas of the colours themselves; for the ideas of greater or lesser degrees of refrangibility being applied to these words, and the blind man being instructed in what other respects they were found to agree or to

disagree, it was as easy for him to reason upon the words as if he had been fully master of the ideas. Indeed it must be owned he could make no new discoveries in the way of experiment. He did nothing but what we do every day in common discourse. When I wrote this last sentence, and used the words *every day and common discourse*, I had no images in my mind of any succession of time ; nor of men in conference with each other ; nor do I imagine that the reader will have any such ideas on reading it. Neither when I spoke of red, blue, and green, as well as of refrangibility ; had I these several colours, or the rays of light passing into a different medium, and there diverted from their course, painted before me in the way of images. I know very well that the mind possesses a faculty of raising such images at pleasure ; but then an act of the will is necessary to this ; and in ordinary conversation or reading it is very rarely that any image at all is excited in the mind. If I say, “ I shall go to Italy next summer,” I am well understood. Yet I believe no body has by this painted in his imagination the exact figure of the speaker passing by land or by water, or both ; sometimes on horseback, sometimes in a carriage ; with all the particulars of the journey. Still less has he any idea of Italy, the country to  
which

which I proposed to go; or of the greenness of the fields, the ripening of the fruits, and the warmth of the air, with the change to this from a different season, which are the ideas for which the word *summer* is substituted; but least of all has he any image from the word *next*; for this word stands for the idea of many summers, with the exclusion of all but one: and surely the man who says *next summer*, has no images of such a succession, and such an exclusion. In short, it is not only of those ideas which are commonly called abstract, and of which no image at all *can* be formed, but even of particular real beings, that we converse without having any idea of them excited in the imagination; as will certainly appear on a diligent examination of our own minds.

## S E C T. VI.

P O E T R Y not strictly an imitative art.

**H**ENCE we may observe that poetry, taken in it's most general sense, cannot with strict propriety be called an art of imitation. It is indeed an imitation so far as it describes the manners and passions of men, which their words can express; where *animi mo-*

*tus effert interprete lingua.* There it is strictly imitation; and all merely *dramatic* poetry is of this sort. But *descriptive* poetry operates chiefly by *substitution*; by the means of sounds, which by custom have the effect of realities. Nothing is an imitation further than as it resembles some other thing; and words undoubtedly have no sort of resemblance to the ideas for which they stand.

## S E C T. VI.

How W O R D S influence the passions.

N O W, as words affect, not by any original power, but by representation, it might be supposed, that their influence over the passions should be but light; yet it is quite otherwise; for we find by experience that eloquence and poetry are as capable, nay indeed much more capable of making deep and lively impressions than any other arts, and even than nature itself in very many cases. And this arises chiefly from these three causes. First, that we take an extraordinary part in the passions of others, and that we are easily affected and brought into sympathy by any tokens which are shewn of them; and there are no tokens which can express all the circumstances  
of



of most passions so fully as words; so that if a person speaks upon any subject, he can not only convey the subject to you, but likewise the manner in which he is himself affected by it. Certain it is, that the influence of most things on our passions is not so much from the things themselves, as from our opinions concerning them; and these again depend very much on the opinions of other men, conveyable for the most part by words only. Secondly; there are many things of a very affecting nature, which can seldom occur in the reality, but the words which represent them often do; and thus they have an opportunity of making a deep impression and taking root in the mind, whilst the idea of the reality was transient; and to some perhaps never really occurred in any shape, to whom it is notwithstanding very affecting, as war, death, famine, &c. Besides, many ideas have never been at all presented to the senses of any men but by words, as God, angels, devils, heaven and hell, all of which have however a great influence over the passions. Thirdly; by words we have it in our power to make such *combinations* as we cannot possibly do otherwise. By this power of combining we can, by the addition of well-chosen circumstances, give a new life and force to the simple object. In painting we may represent any

any fine figure we please; but we never can give it those enlivening touches which it may receive from words. To represent an angel in a picture, you can only draw a beautiful young man winged; but what painting can furnish out any thing so grand as the addition of one word, “the angel of the *Lord*?” It is true, I have here no clear idea, but these words affect the mind more than the sensible image did, which is all I contend for. A picture of Priam dragged to the altar’s foot, and there murdered, if it were well executed would undoubtedly be very moving; but there are very aggravating circumstances, which it could never represent.

*Sanguine fœdantem quos ipse sacraverat ignes.*

As a further instance, let us consider those lines of Milton, where he describes the travels of the fallen angels through their dismal habitation,

————— *O'er many a dark and dreary vale  
They pass'd, and many a region dolorous.  
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp.  
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens and shades of death.  
A universe of death.*

Here

Here is displayed the force of union in

*Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens and shades;*

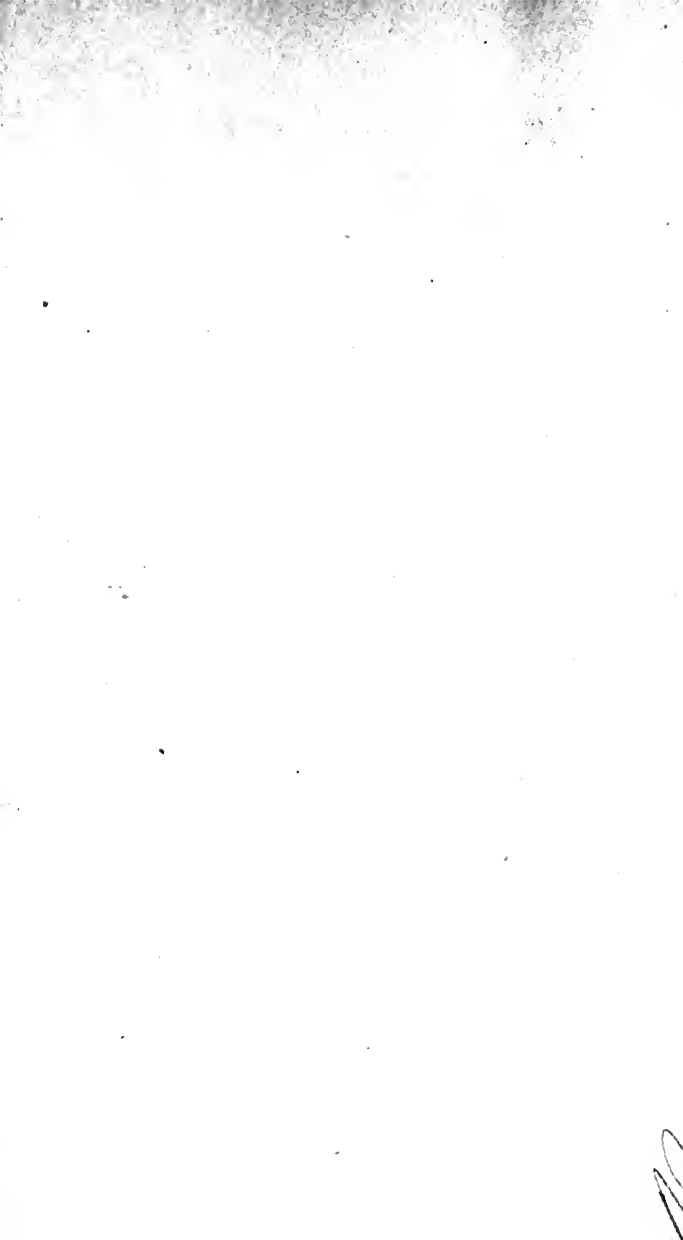
which yet would lose the greatest part of their effect, if they were not the

*Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens and shades—  
—of death.*

This idea or affection caused by a word, which nothing but a word could annex to the others, raises a very great degree of the sublime; and it is raised yet higher by what follows, a “*universe of death.*” Here are again two ideas not presentible but by language; and an union of them great and amazing beyond conception. Whoever attentively considers this passage of Milton, and indeed all of the best and most affecting descriptions of poetry, will find, that it does not in general produce its end by raising the images of things, but by exciting a passion similar to that which real objects excite by other instruments. And in proportion as words of a sublime effect, or words which are used to express the objects of love and tenderness, are joined in a manner found by experience the best for these purposes; in that proportion the most perfect kinds

kinds of the sublime and beautiful are formed in poetry. It compasses all its other ends in a manner analogous. It might be expected from the fertility of the subject, that I should consider poetry as it regards the sublime and beautiful more at large; but it must be observed that this matter has been handled by many authors before. It was not my design to enter into the criticism of the sublime and beautiful in any art, but to attempt to lay down such principles as may tend to ascertain, to distinguish, and to form a sort of standard for them; which purposes I thought might be best effected by an enquiry into the properties of such things in nature as raise love and astonishment in us; and in what manner they operated to produce these passions. Words were only so far to be considered, as to shew upon what principle they were capable of being the representatives of these natural things, and by what powers they were able to affect us often as strongly as things in nature do, and sometimes much more strongly.

F I N I S.



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